Sri Muruganar

GURU VACHAKA KOVAI

The Light of Supreme Truth
or
THE COLLECTION
OF GURU'S SAYINGS

Translated from the Original Tamil
by
Sadhu Om and Michael James

With an Introduction by
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Sri Muruganar

Introduction by David Godman

In the late 1920s Muruganar, an accomplished Tamil poet who had lived with Bhagavan for several years, began to collect the verbal teachings of his Guru, Ramana Maharshi. He recorded them in four-line Tamil verses. No questions were recorded, just the answers and statements on a wide variety of spiritual topics. By the late 1930s, Muruganar had completed over 800 of these verses, virtually all of which recorded a direct teaching statement that Bhagavan had uttered. In 1939 a decision was made to publish these teachings in book form. Bhagavan then asked Sadhu Natanananda, a Tamil scholar and devotee, to arrange the verses by subjects since there was no particular order or sequence in the material that Muruganar had amassed. After Natanananda had done this work and shown it to Bhagavan, Bhagavan himself thoroughly edited the work, modifying the sequences and adding many revisions. In addition to making these textual corrections, Bhagavan also composed new verses that he added at appropriate places in the text. Because of the care and attention that Bhagavan put into checking and revising these verses, we can be sure that their contents have his full approval.

Many of Bhagavan's verbal teachings were recorded during his lifetime, but few of them were reviewed and edited by him. *Guru Vachaka Kovai* is the biggest collection of Bhagavan's spoken teachings that was thoroughly checked and revised by him during his lifetime. As such it has a unique place in the Ramana literature.

A second edition of the Tamil work was brought out in 1971. This contained many additional verses that Muruganar had composed since the first edition of the book came out in 1939. This new edition of the work contained a total of 1,284 verses, 1,254 composed by Muruganar and the remaining twenty-eight by Bhagavan himself.

Muruganar passed away in 1973. In 1980 Sadhu Om, Muruganar's literary executor, brought out a new edition of *Guru Vachaka Kovai* in which he rendered the original Tamil verses (which are often very difficult to decipher unless one has a good knowledge of Tamil literary conventions) into Tamil prose. He also

added explanatory comments to many of the prose renderings. This book is the basis of the version I am including on this site.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s Michael James and Sadhu Om worked together on a translation of *Guru Vachaka Kovai*. Although all the verses were translated, along with many of the commentaries, the work was never published since Michael was not satisfied with the accuracy of some of the verses. In a conversation I had with him many years ago he told me that he wanted to revise many of the early verses since he felt that some of them were somewhat loose paraphrases of the text, rather than literal translations.

After Sadhu Om passed away in 1984, Michael suspended work on his translation of *Guru Vachaka Kovai* and switched his attention to other projects, such as bringing out the unpublished works of Muruganar and Sadhu Om. His manuscript of *Guru Vachaka Kovai* has therefore not been revised for almost twenty years.

Over the years I have shown Michael James' and Sadhu Om's version of *Guru Vachaka Kovai* to several people, and everyone has appreciated its rigorous literalness. Only one version of *Guru Vachaka Kovai* has ever appeared in English before, the one by Professor Swaminathan that was initially serialised in *The Mountain Path* and later published by Sri Ramanasramam. Professor Swaminathan's version attempted to retain the poetic element of the original, but in many places this resulted in a diminution of accuracy. Sadhu Om and Michael James decided that, since the verses recorded philosophical statements by Bhagavan, a literal translation would be of more interest to readers and devotees since an accurate rendering would fully reveal all the nuances of Bhagavan's teachings on many different subjects.

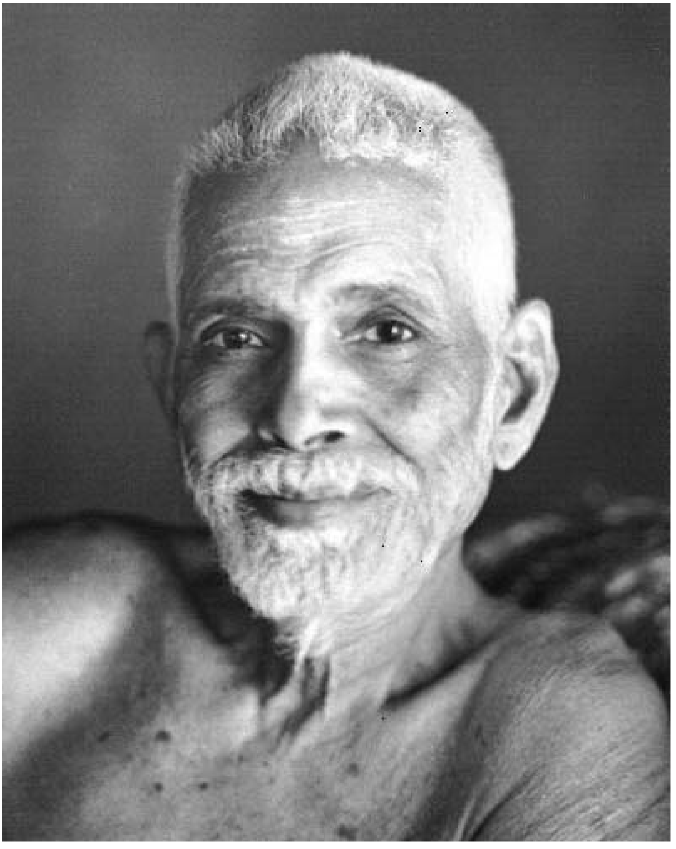
A few months ago I asked Michael if I could post his translation on my site since it appeared very unlikely that he would get round to making a final version in the near future. Michael agreed and asked that it be billed as a '***work in progress***', not a completed work. I wish here to express my gratitude and appreciation to Michael for allowing this incomplete work to be given a public airing.

The manuscript I worked with had many oddities and rough edges, most of which I have left untouched. I don't want to impose

my own editorial red pencil on Michael's endeavours; I just want to express a wish that he one day complete the work and bring out a final, definitive version. I have, however, standardized some of the spellings and added attributions to the notes that follow many of the verses. Both Muruganar and Sadhu Om have written commentaries on *Guru Vachaka Kovai*. When these have been utilized, I have added the appropriate names at the top of the notes. When there are no published Tamil sources for the notes, I have attributed them to Michael James. However, since Michael worked closely with Sadhu Om as he was preparing these notes, I think it is safe to say that most of them represent supplementary verbal comments by Sadhu Om that Michael added in order to clarify the original text.

Finally, Michael wishes to make it known that anyone is free to use this material. However, this does not mean that he is giving away any of the rights to this work. He intends to complete the editorial work one day and to bring out his own edition of the work.

DAVID GODMAN



Sri Ramana Maharshi (1879–1950)

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Arunachala Ramanaya

The Light of Supreme Truth
or
THE COLLECTION OF GURU'S SAYINGS

Prefatory Verses

Obeisance to the Guru

1. This Light [i.e., these verses] of the Guru's Teachings, which destroys the base nature of mind – 'I' and 'mine' – shines as Self, illuminating our hearts, whenever we long with increasing despair for Grace.

2. The Eternal One graciously took the form of Guru [Ramana] and lovingly claimed me – who was a victim to the delusion 'I am the body' – as His own, reforming me with the sense 'I am not this filthy inert body'. May my head rest beneath the Feet of the Benign, Gracious, Silent Guru.

3. The perfect *Jnana*-Guru [Ramana] ably and precisely presents the right meaning in many contradictory statements, and passes apt judgement over various discussions, revealing the One Supreme Truth that lies in harmony among them all. May my head rest beneath his Feet.

1 The Name and Origin of this Work

4 This clear *Light of Supreme Truth* was not lit by my innocent, infant mind, which has not seen the Truth. It was lit by the fully ripened Supreme Knowledge of my Master Sri Ramana.

5. Many instructions to root out ignorance [i.e. inattention to Self] were given by my Beloved, Eternal, Companion [Sri Ramana] whose Real Form is That [*Sat-Chit*] which exists, shines, and reveals Itself as 'I'. I now recount some of those instructions which my mind has grasped and preserved.

6. **I, being there where Ramana embraced me, will recount a little of the nature of the Supreme Truth which I have come to know in my life of Divine Union with Him, my Master.**

Michael James: "There where Ramana embraced me" refers to the Supreme State of being firmly established in Self.

"Supreme Truth" alludes to the title of the whole work, *The Light of Supreme Truth*.

7. **I now compose and string together all the Supreme Truth that I come to know through the Divine Glance bestowed upon me by my Lord Guru Ramana, who destroyed my delusion caused by the ego sense, leaving me in a state of clarity.**

2 The Benefit or Fruit of this Work

8. **The benefit of this *Light of Supreme Truth* is the understanding that there is not the least thing such as 'attainment', since the Supreme Self is the Ever-Attained One Whole. Thus the mental wanderings caused by striving towards *Dharma*, *Artha*, and *Kama* are also removed.**

Sadhu Om: Up till now the *shastras* have prescribed, as the rightful goals of human life, the following four aims:

Dharma: the practice of righteous social duties.
Artha: the acquisition of wealth through righteous means.
Kama: the satisfaction of desires within righteous limits.
Moksha: liberation, the natural state of abiding as Self.

This work, *The Light of Supreme Truth* shows us now that the first three worldly aims are futile and transitory, and thus it removes our wandering mental efforts to attain them. We may however still think, "Is not mental effort at least needed to obtain *Moksha*?" but again this Light shows us the meaninglessness of striving to 'attain' Self, which is ever-attained, and instead it recommends the cessation of all mental activity, thereby fixing us in the eternal, motionless and ever-attained State of Self. Is there therefore any Supreme Goal other than that which is given here, through this *Light of Supreme Truth*? Refer to verse 1204.

9. Self, which is one's own true nature, is the substratum of all happiness in this and in other worlds. Therefore, to be firmly established in Self, unshaken by thoughts concerning the various other paths [Karmas, Yogas etc.,] which will lead only to the pleasures of this and of other worlds, is the fruit of this work.

3 The Submission to the Assembly

Michael James: It was the tradition in ancient days for a writer to submit his work to an Assembly of learned men. He therefore had to compose a verse of 'Submission', requesting the Assembly to correct any error found in his work.

10. When scrutinized it will be found that these sweet verses of *The Collection of the Guru's Sayings* have not been composed by my dull and deluded thinking mind, but that they have been inspired without thought by the Divine Venkatavan [Sri Ramana].

11. Why should I offer a 'Submission to the Assembly' for a work which has not been done with the sense of doership, 'I'? The whole responsibility for this work belongs to Him, the Supreme Lord [Sri Ramana], whom even the Great Ones can realize only through the *Samadhi* of Mystic Silence within their hearts.

4 Dedication

12. Since it was my mother who helped me [in giving me this birth] to achieve the Attainment [*Jnana*] dispelling ignorance, I gratefully present this work to Her. "Let this be a dedication to her pure heart which knew not any deceit."

5 The Author

13. Kanna Murugan [Sri Muruganar], who through the look of Grace has seen *Chit*, the grandeur of all wealth, is merely the Divine Feet of his Master [Sri Ramana], strung into a garland some of his Guru's words and has given it [to the world] as the Supreme Treasure.

PART ONE
AN ANALYSIS OF THE TRUTH

Benedictory Verses

14. In response to the great and befitting penance [*tapas*] performed by the ocean-girdled Mother Earth, the nameless and formless Supreme *Brahman* Itself took the glorious name and form of Sri Ramana *Sadguru*. May those spotlessly pure Feet – *Sat-Chit* [Existence-Consciousness] – be in our hearts.

Michael James: The *tapas* performed by Mother Earth is a poetic way of referring to the intense longing for Truth of many matured aspirants on Earth. This longing naturally brings forth the Supreme in the form of a *Sadguru* such as Sri Ramana.

15. Self, that pure *Brahma*n which is Itself the Mono-syllable, shining as the heart of all beings and things, is the excellent and sweet benediction to this *Collection of the Guru's Sayings*, which removes the delusion of ignorant ones.

Sadhu Om: It is worth referring here to one stray verse of Sri Bhagavan Ramana: "One Syllable shines for ever in the Heart as Self; who can write It down?" The One Syllable mentioned in both cases is 'I' [*Aham*] or Self, which is unwritable, being beyond thought, word or expression.

16. The experience of our own Existence, which is the Supreme Reality, *Jnana* Itself, shines as the Mystic Silence and is the True Self behind the fictitious first person 'I'. May that Absolute Supreme Self, [known as] the Feet, be upon our heads.

17. For those who turn within, the perfect asset is the Grace of Guru Ramana, whose true form is the sleepless-sleep [*Turiya*]; it is the sweet Fruit whose juice is the supremely pure Bliss that creates in the aspirant an ever-increasing taste, free from aversion, and It is the beautiful Lamp which, without need of kindling, leads one to the Heart.

Sadhu Om: Grace is here shown to be the same as *Turiya*, the true form of Guru Ramana, which shines eternally as 'I-I', the self-luminous Heart and is therefore called the lamp which needs no kindling.

There are two possible translations of the next verse:

18a. My Master Sri Ramana has taken possession of me, destroying the miseries caused by my inattention to Self; His beauty is His Oneness with *Jnana* and His True Form lies beyond both attachment and detachment. His Feet are the perfect example of all precepts of the Truth.

18b. My Master Sri Ramana has taken possession of me, destroying the miseries caused by my inattention to Self. Though He has the beauty of *Jnana* and Renunciation, His True Form lies beyond both attachment and detachment, and His Feet are the perfect example of all precepts of the Truth.

1 The Truth or Reality of the World

19. As cause alone is seen as its effect, and since Consciousness [*Brahman*], which is the cause, is as clearly true as an *amalaka* fruit on one's palm, this vast universe, its effect, which is described in the scriptures as mere names and forms, may also be called true.

Sadhu Om: *Brahman* has five aspects, *Sat-Chit-Ananda-Nama-Rupa* [i.e., Being, Awareness, Bliss, name and form]. The first three aspects are real, being eternally Self-shining, whereas name and form are unreal aspects, since they merely seem to exist, depending upon the illumination of *Sat-Chit-Ananda*.

If, however, one sees the cause, *Sat-Chit-Ananda*, which is real, one may say, ignoring the apparent names and forms, that this universe is also real.

20. When viewed from the standpoint of the eternally self-existent Cause, even the three, seven or twenty-one worlds will appear to be real. But when one sees only the names and forms of the world as

real, then even *Brahma*n, their cause, will appear to be absolutely non-existent or void [*sunya*].

Michael James: The three, seven and twenty-one worlds occur in different traditional, cosmological classifications.

21. For the sake of those [ignorant ones] who take the world, which appears before them, as real and enjoyable [it became necessary for the scriptures to say that] it is God's creation. But for those who have obtained unobstructed Knowledge of Self, the world is seen merely as a bondage-causing mental imagination.

22. This world of empty names and forms, which are the imagination of the five senses and an appearance in the pure Supreme Self, should be understood to be the mysterious play of *Maya*, the mind, which rises as if real from Self, *Sat-Chit*.

Michael James: The origin of *Maya*, meaning "that which is not" is unknown; it appears, functioning in man, as mind, and is inferred in God through his actions, sustenance, and dissolution of this whole universe; it ends, on being seen to be non-existent, when the Truth is known.

The seer, known as mind or 'I', and the seen, known as the world, rise and set simultaneously in Self. If Self sees Itself through Itself, it is Self; if It sees Itself through the mind or 'seer', it appears as the world or 'seen'.

23. The Realised who do not know anything as being other than Self, which is absolute Consciousness, will not say that the world, which has no existence in the view of the Supreme *Brahma*n, is real.

Michael James: The Tamil word *Iraivan* is usually understood as meaning God, the Lord of this world, and as Bhagavan has elsewhere explained, the trinity of soul, world and their Lord will always appear to co-exist in *Maya*, and thus the apparent world does exist in the view of its apparent Lord, God. Therefore, on seeing this verse, Bhagavan remarked "Who said that there is no world in God's view?", but when the author, Sri Muruganar, explained that

he had used the word in the sense of the Supreme *Brahman*, Sri Bhagavan accepted this meaning and approved the verse.

24. O man, like a parrot waiting expectantly for the silk-cotton fruit to ripen, you persist in your sufferings, believing this world appearance to be real and enjoyable; if the world is real simply because it appears to your senses, then a mirage would be water.

Michael James: The fruit of a silk-cotton tree always remains green, not turning colour even after ripening; the parrot meanwhile waits expectantly, hoping to eat it when it changes colour, but is finally disappointed when it bursts, scattering its hairy seeds.

25. Forgetting Self, which gives you [the seer] light to see, and being confused, do not run after this appearance [the world which you see]. The appearance will disappear, and is hence not real, but Self, the source of you [the seer], can never disappear, so know that That alone is real.

26. Is the word 'Real' befitting to this world, which is seen only by the illusory and changeful mind, but not by Self, the source of mind?

Michael James: As Self knows Itself alone to be, any imagination such as this world is entirely non-existent to It, and thus is never seen by It.

27. Fear not on seeing this empty world, which appears as a dream in the sleep of Self-forgetfulness. This imaginary and bondage-causing world-picture, [projected on the background] of the dark, dense mind, will not stand in the light of Supreme Knowledge, *Sat-Chit-Ananda*.

28. O aspirants who hide yourselves away fearing this world, nothing such as a world exists! Fearing this false world which appears to exist, is like fearing the false snake which appears in a rope.

29. This world is only seen without doubts in the waking and dream states where thoughts have risen and are

at play. Can it be seen in sleep where not even a single thought rises? Thoughts alone [therefore] are the substratum of this world.

30. If it is thus said that this world is a mere play of thoughts, why, even when the mind is quiet, does the world-scene, like a dream, suddenly appear in front of us? That is due to the stored momentum of past imaginations!

31. Just as the spider emits the thread [of its web] out from its own mouth and again withdraws it back, so the mind projects the world out from itself and again absorbs it back within.

32. When the mind passes through the brain and the five senses, the names and forms [of this world] are projected out from within. When the mind abides in the Heart, they return and lie buried there.

33. This world, full of differences of names and forms, will remain as [the undifferentiated] *Brahman* when these are removed. The ignorant one masks the Supreme with imaginary names and forms and, being thereby self-deluded, sees Him as the world.

34. The deceptive I-am-the-body idea alone makes the world, which is an appearance of names and forms, seem real, and thereby it at once binds itself with desires [for the world].

35. Since this world of dyads and triads appears only in the mind, like the illusory ring of fire formed [in darkness] by whirling the single point of a glowing rope-end, it is false, and it does not exist in the clear sight of Self.

36. O worldly-minded man who is unable to understand the wise reasoning and the teachings of Sages about the Supreme Knowledge, if properly scrutinized, this big universe of delusion is seen to be nothing but the illusive play of the *vasanas* [mental tendencies] within you.

37. Like the illusory yellow seen by a jaundiced eye, the whole world that you see before you is the product of

your own mind, which is full of deceptive vices such as desire [anger, lust and so on]. In reality, however, it is a plenitude of pure *Jnana*.

38. Just as 'yellow' fades away in the sunlight, the appearance of this world disappears in the Light of Self-Knowledge, and therefore it cannot be a creation of the Supreme [Self]. It is merely like the beautiful colour designs which appear on a peacock's plumage; that is to say, it is only the reflection of the *vasanas* within you.

Michael James: 'Yellow' in South India refers to turmeric, whose stain fades away in sunlight.

Beautiful colour designs, which are not seen on each individual peacock feather, appear on its plumage, due to the combination and positioning of many feathers.

39. This world is a mere illusion seen in the deluded objective sight of the ego, which is simply the 'I-am-the-body' idea. In the sight of Self-Knowledge, however, it is as false as the apparent blueness in the sky.

40. How does this false and villainous vast world, that cheats and ravages the minds of all people [except the wise], come into existence? Because of no reason other than our own mistake in falling away from, instead of clinging to, Self-attention.

41. This life, an illusion based upon [our] likes and dislikes, is an empty dream, which appears, as if real, during the sleep [of ignorance], but which is found to be false when one wakes up [into Self-Knowledge].

42. When the mind is least in pure Supreme Self-Consciousness, all the powers which seemed to function [through the mind], such as '*Icheha*' [will-power], '*Kriya*' [the power of action] and '*Jnana*' [the power of knowing], will cease, being found to be imaginary.

43. The projected picture of this world of triads is a play of *Chit-Para-Shakti* [i.e., the power or reflected light

of Self-Consciousness] on the screen of Supreme Consciousness.

44. The appearance of this illusory world, which is seen as real, is just like the serpent seen in a rope, the thief seen in a tree-stump or the water seen in a mirage.

45. The various ornaments fashioned out of gold are not different from the gold, and similarly, this world of moving and unmoving things, manifested out of Self, cannot be other than Self.

46. Self is hidden when the world appears, but when Self shines forth, the world will disappear. Being different in nature, like the [apparent] dog [seen in] the stone, both cannot be seen together.

Sadhu Om* and *Michael James: The nature of Self, the true aspect of *Brahman*, is not these names and forms, whereas the nature of the world, the false aspect of *Brahman*, is not *Sat-Chit-Ananda*, so both cannot be seen simultaneously. See also verses 876, 877, 1216.

47. This world which appears, concealing Self, is a mere dream, but when 'concealed' by Self, it remains as none other than Self.

48. This whole world of triads which deludes us, seeming to be an undisputable reality, is only the form of the Supreme Power [*Chit-Shakti*], which abides eternally as none other than the Supreme Self.

49. As the fire shines hidden within the smoke, the Light of Knowledge shines hidden within the names and forms of this world. When the mind is made clear by Supreme Grace, the nature of the world is found to be real [as Self], and it will appear no more as the illusory names and forms.

50. For those who never lose the True Knowledge of Self, which is the base of all sense-knowledge, the world also is nothing other than Self-Knowledge. But, how can an ordinary man, who has not gained Self-knowl-

edge, understand the statement of Sages who, seeing through *Jnana*, say that the world is real?

51. Those who have given up worldly [i.e. sense-] knowledge and attachment to it, and who have destroyed the evil force of mind [i.e. *Maya*], thus gaining Supreme Self-Consciousness, alone can know the correct meaning of the statement, "The world is Real".

52. If one's outlook is changed into *Jnana* [Divine Wisdom], seen through That, the entire universe, consisting of the five elements such as ether and so on, will be found to be real, being the Supreme Knowledge Itself. Thus you should see.

53. If one's outlook is changed into *Jnana*, seen through That, this same world, seen previously as a hell of misery, will be found to be a heaven of Bliss.

54. As per the saying "The seen cannot differ from the seeing eyes", the *Jnani*, whose eye [i.e. outlook] has become *Sat-Chit-Ananda* due to the cessation of all mental activities, sees this world also as *Sat-Chit-Ananda*.

Michael James: See verse 343.

55. The appearance of this world, like the illusory appearance of a dream, is merely mental and its truth [therefore] can be known correctly only by the Supreme Consciousness that transcends *Maya*, the mind.

56. O foolish, illusory mind, deluded by seeing the daily dream which is nothing but your [mind's] own nature, if you discern the true nature of your own Self, which is *Sat-Chit-Ananda*, can this world be anything other than That?

57. This empty world, bewildering with multiplicity, is, in its original state, unbroken uniform Bliss, just as the multi-coloured peacock is, in its original state, the single-coloured yellow egg-yolk. Abide as Self and know this truth.

58. Those who have attained their aim, *Jnana*, do not see

this world as a multitude of differences, since the multiple differences of this world are a sportive play of *Chit-Shakti*, the one Whole.

59. For the *Jnani*, who, free from the 'I-am-the-body' idea, is established in Self, this world shines as His own Self-Knowledge; and therefore it is wrong for us to see it as something different [i.e. as multiple names and forms].

60. By turning Selfward, you destroy your delusion, this world; what then remains as 'this is void' is known by you, Self; so, to destroy this [apparent] void also, drown it in the ocean of Self-Knowledge.

61. If you abide in the Heart as *Sat-Chit* ['I am'], by which the whole universe exists and shines, then this world will also become one with you, losing its false, frightening dualities.

62. He who knows this world-appearance to be his own form, Supreme-Consciousness, experiences the same Consciousness even through his five senses.

2 The Unreality of the World

63. Some assert, "This world before our eyes, though not permanent, is real enough". We deny it saying, "Permanence is one of the marks of Reality".

64. Some people argue, "Though divided, this world we see cannot be devoid of Reality". We refute them saying, "Wholeness is also a mark of Reality".

Sadhu Om: Eternal, Unchanging and Self-Shining: these, Sri Bhagavan Ramana used to declare, are the three essential factors of Reality.

65. Because the nature of Reality is Whole, Self-radiant Existence, transcending time and space, *Jnanis* will never deem as real this world, which is destroyed by Time's Wheel.

66. The One Supreme Bliss, '*Sadhasivam*' [i.e. Self] is alone approved [by *Jnanis*] to be the Whole Reality. This world, seen as full of miseries and defects, is

known only by the mind which is unreal and divided with differences.

67. It is the result of the delusion I-am-the-limited-body, that the world, which is nothing but Consciousness, is known as a second entity, separate from Consciousness.

68. Will that which is perceived by the senses of this unreal body be real or unreal? O mind, worried and wearied by worldly ways, consider this thoroughly now and reply.

69. Whatever is seen by the ego who, having fallen from the true state of Self and having been buried deep in dark ignorance, takes the body as 'I', is not at all real and is simply non-existent.

70. Though the appearance of the world seems to be very real and attractive, it can only appear in '*Chittam*' which is '*Chit-Abhasa*' [the reflection of Self-Consciousness]. In pure Self-Consciousness, however, it is non-existent.

Michael James: Just as a cinema picture can be seen clearly only in a limited light on a dark background, and will fade away in the bright sunlight, so also the world-appearance can be seen clearly only in the limited light of the mind and will disappear in the light of pure Self-Consciousness. The limited consciousness of the mind is a mere reflection of Self-Consciousness, conditioned as *'Chittam'*, the store of tendencies which acts like the roll of film in the cinema analogy. See also verse 244, where this idea is further explained and clarified. See verse 114.

3 The Allurement of the World

71. Just as the goat's beard wanders and wags for nothing, people roam about merrily but in vain, doing *Karmas* for the fulfillment of their worldly desires, while despising the disciplines [followed by aspirants] which lead to eternal *Moksha* in Self. Ah, what a pitiable spectacle is the condition of these worldly people!

72. Longing for a tiny grain of pleasure, people toil so

hard using the mind to plough the field of the five senses, but they never wish for the flood of Bliss which is the fruit that comes by ploughing the Heart, the Source of the mind, with [simple] Self-attention. Ah, what a wonder!

73. The moon-like *jiva* [the mind], ever wedded to the sun-like Self, should always remain in her home, the Heart; to forsake the Bliss of Self and go astray for worldly pleasures, is like the madness of a wife who spoils her precious chastity.

Michael James: See also verses 996.

74. Only when the world's allurement is lost will true Liberation be possible [and its allurement cannot be lost unless it is found to be unreal]. Hence, to try to foist reality upon this world is to be just like an infatuated lover who tries to foist chastity upon a prostitute.

Sadhu Om: A lover foists chastity upon a prostitute only because of his infatuation with her, and similarly some schools of thought argue and try to insist upon the world's reality, only because of their immense desire for the enjoyment of this world. Therefore Liberation, which is the fruit of desirelessness, is absolutely impossible for them. Refer also to verse 635.

4 The Aridity of the World

75. Only for the mad folk who are deluded, mistaking this fictitious world as a fact, and not for the *Jnani*, is there anything to revel in except *Brahman*, which is Consciousness.

76. Will those who are rooted in the Knowledge of Truth stray to worldly ways? Is it not the base and weak nature of animals that descends to the sensual pleasures of this unreal world?

77. If you ask, "What is the benefit of sacrificing the innumerable sensual pleasures and retaining mere Consciousness?", [we reply that] the fruit of *Jnana* is the eternal and unbroken experience of the Bliss of Self.

Sadhu Om: Any experience of worldly pleasure is small and interrupted, whereas the Bliss of Self attained through *Jnana* is eternal and unbroken, and is therefore the greatest benefit.

78. Truly there is not the least happiness in any single worldly objects, so how then is the foolish mind deluded into thinking that happiness comes from them?

79. Fools are now so proud and happy of the wealth and pleasure of this world, which may at any time abandon them in disappointment and distress.

80. Suffering from the heat of the three-fold desires, all living beings wander in the empty and arid desert of this dream-world, which is created by the whirl of past tendencies. The shade of the Bodhi-tree which can completely cool this heat is only Self, which shines as *Turiya* [the fourth state].

Michael James: The three-fold desires are for women, wealth and fame.

5 Playing One's Role in the World

81. Realising the truth of Self within your heart and ever abiding as the Supreme, act according to the human role which you have taken in this world, as if you taste its pleasures and pains.

82. It is not right for the Wise One to behave improperly, even though He has known all that is to be known and attained all that is to be attained. Therefore, observe the code of conduct which is befitting to your outward mode of life.

The last line refers to religions, caste, and so on.

6 *Vivartha Siddhanta*
(The Doctrine of Simultaneous Creation)

83. From his condescending opening words, "Because we see the world", it is to be understood that the Great Master, Bhagavan Sri Ramana, who gives the most practical assistance to aspirants, sets aside all

other doctrines and teaches that only the 'Doctrine of *Vivartha'* is suitable to be taken as true.

Sadhu Om: 'Because we see the world' are the first words of verse one of *Ulladu Narpadu*, Bhagavan's forty-verse poem on the nature of reality.

Though His experience of the Truth can only be adequately expressed by the '*Doctrine of Ajata*', Bhagavan Sri Ramana uses only the '*Doctrine of Vivartha*' for His Teachings.

Assuming a cause and its effect, religions generally teach that God has created individual souls and the world; some teach the '*Doctrine of Dwaita*' [duality], which postulates that all these three [God, souls and the world] will eternally remain separate; others teach the '*Doctrine of Vishishtadwaita*' [Qualified non-duality], which postulates that though duality now prevails, the souls and the world will at some later time merge into union with God; others again teach the '*Doctrine of Advaita*' [Non-duality], which postulates that even now, though they seem to be separate, these three are in truth mere appearances and are none other than the one Reality; and many other doctrines are also taught by various religions.

Aspirants may be graded into four levels of maturity, dull *[manda],* medium *[madhyama]*, ripe *[teevra]* and fully ripe *[Ati teevra]*; those of the first two grades will readily accept the '*Doctrine of Dwaita*' or '*Vishishtadwaita*'.

The '*Doctrine of Vivartha*' is recommended to explain the standpoint of *Advaita*, i.e., to explain how the world-appearance, its seer, and the seer's knowledge of the appearance all come into existence simultaneously, unconditioned by cause and effect. However, since this accepts the appearance of the world, souls and God, it is only a working hypothesis to help aspirants. The '*Doctrine of Ajata*', on the other hand, never accepts even the appearance of this trinity, but proclaims that the One Self-shining Reality alone exists eternally and without modification; *Ajata* is therefore the highest of all doctrines and it is only suitable for the fully-ripened aspirants.

Bhagavan Sri Ramana therefore comes down condescendingly and, setting aside '*Ajata*' and the two lower doctrines, He advocates through His *Forty Verses on Reality* the '*Doctrine of*

Vivartha' which is suitable for the ripe aspirants who have no faith in the lower doctrines, yet do not have the maturity to grasp the highest, '*Ajata*'.

84. All that is perceived by the mind was already within the heart. Know that all perceptions are a reproduction of past tendencies now being projected outside [through the five senses].

85. Self Itself is seen [due to *Maya*] appearing as the many names and forms of this universe, but It does not act as the cause or the doer, creating, sustaining and destroying this universe.

86. Do not ask, "Why does Self, as if confused, not know the Truth that It is Itself which is seen as the world?" If instead you enquire, "To whom does this confusion occur?", it will be discovered that no such confusion ever existed for Self!

Sadhu Om: Through Self-enquiry the confused doubter, who is the ego, will lose his identity and be drowned in Self; it will then be discovered that neither ignorance nor confusion ever existed for Self, but only for the non-existent ego.

87. Self appearing as the world is just like a rope seeing itself as a snake; just as the snake is, on scrutiny, found to be ever non-existent, so is the world found to be ever non-existent, even as an appearance.

88. In fact, is it not a single deluded thought that creates the snake – which, though appearing to be separate, is truly not other than that thought itself – in a rope; and that then sustains this snake as the cause of its own misery; and that will finally destroy this snake [by obtaining a clear knowledge of its own true nature]?

Sadhu Om: It is thus concluded there that it is not Self but ignorance, due to non-enquiry, which is the real cause of the creation, sustenance, and dissolution of the world. Refer also to verse 91.

89. The seed and its sprout seem to co-operate, each being in turn the cause of the other, and yet each

effect also destroys its cause; in fact the effect is not really produced by the cause, since both are produced only by the imagination of the ignorant mind.

90. If the rope were itself a sentient being, would any other being be needed for it to be seen as a snake? Similarly, as Self is Existence-Consciousness, the world is merely a destruction of this single Consciousness.

91. Has Self changed its nature of still Being into that of motion, or how else has this world come into existence? Self has never undergone change or movement; this world seems to exist solely because of ignorance, which is itself false.

Michael James: This same idea continues to be illustrated and developed in the following eight verses.

92. When, in the view of the one indivisible space, even the pot has no separate existence, is it not foolish to say that the space inside the pot moves with the movements of the pot?

93. Similarly, when, in the plenitude of Self-Consciousness, body and world cannot even exist, being non-Self and incomplete, it is ridiculous to say that Self moves because of the movements of the mutable body and world.

94. Though Self, which is ever still because of Its wholeness, seems to move with the movements of the unsteady mirror, the mind, it is never the real Self that moves, but only its reflection, the mind.

95. If it is asked, "How did the delusive *upadhis* [attributes such as mind, intellect, *chittam* etc.] [appear to] arise for the Supreme Self, which is One without a second?", it must be replied that they are seen to arise only in the view of the ignorant *jiva*, and that in reality no attribute has ever arisen for Self. Thus you should know!

Sadhu Om: There is no experience of the *upadhis* in *Jnana*, and

therefore they appear only to the ignorant and never to the *Jnani*. Having heard this, the ignorant still ask the *Jnani* how their wrong outlook has come into being, but they should understand that a *Jnani* can never admit that *upadhis* exist for Self, and that it is therefore the responsibility of the ignorant to discover for themselves how and for whom the *upadhis* appear. Thus, Bhagavan often used to counter-question his devotees, and say, “You claim that *upadhis* have come into being and are real, and so you alone must find out what they are, and how, from where, and to whom they appear!”

This illustrates why the ‘*Doctrine of Vivartha*’ [i.e. simultaneous creation] is suited to the questioner’s point of view, which only admits ‘*Ajata*’ [i.e. non-creation]. The note to verse 83 may also be referred to here.

96. A spark of fire can fly out only for a fire-ball of limited size [and it could not do so from a fire which is unlimited and all pervading]. Similarly, it is impossible for *jivas* and the world to arise as tiny separate entities, ‘I’ [and ‘this’], from the Supreme Self, which is the unlimited Whole.

Sadhu Om: This means that the world, God and *jivas* appear only in the view of the *jiva*, who is a false reflection of Self, and that, in the supreme viewpoint of Self, there is no creation at all.

97. The body exists only in the view of the mind, which is deluded and drawn outwards by the power of *Maya*. In the clear view of Self, which is a single vast Space of Consciousness, there is no body at all and it is therefore wrong to call Self ‘*Dehi*’ or ‘*Kshetrajna*’ [the owner or knower of the body].

Sadhu Om: In scriptures like the *Bhagavad Gita*, the Divine Masters have condescended to use terms such as ‘*Dehi*’ and ‘*Kshetrajna*’, because of the inability of their disciples to understand if the truth were stated otherwise.

98. Unless the body is taken to be ‘I’, otherness – the world of moving and unmoving objects – cannot be seen. Hence, because otherness – the creatures and

their Creator – does not exist, it is wrong to call Self the Witness.

Sadhu Om: In the scriptures the terms '*Jiva sakshi*' [i.e. witness of the *jiva*] and '*Sarva sakshi*' [i.e. witness of everything] are used only as a formality, but they are not strictly correct. Only when there is something to be seen can there be a seer or 'witness' to see it. But in a state of oneness, where no others exist, who will witness what? Therefore Self, which is One without a second, cannot be called the witness.

99. The world does not exist apart from the body; the body does not exist apart from the mind; the mind does not exist apart from Consciousness; and Consciousness does not exist apart from Self, which is Existence.

Sadhu Om: Therefore it can be concluded that everything is Self, and that nothing but Self exists.

7 The Doctrine of '*Ajata*'

100. Although Guru Ramana taught various doctrines according to the level of understanding of those who came to Him, we heard from Him that '*Ajata*' alone is truly His own experience. Thus should you know.

Sadhu Om: '*Ajata*' is the knowledge that nothing – neither the world, soul nor God – ever comes into existence, and that 'That Which Is' ever exists as IT is.

101. It is this same '*Ajata*' that Sri Krishna revealed to Arjuna in an early Chapter [two] of the *Gita*, and know that it was only because of the latter's bewilderment and inability to grasp the Truth, that other doctrines were then taught in the remaining sixteen chapters.

8 The Purpose behind the Diverse Theories of Creation

102. Why do the different portions of the *Vedas* describe creation in different ways? Their sole intention is not to proclaim a correct theory of creation, but to make the aspirant enquire into the Truth which is the Source of creation.

Sadhu Om: If creation were true, the scriptures would describe it in only one manner, but their diverse theories make it clear that creation is not the truth. To enable ripe aspirants to discover the falsity of the notion of creation, the *Vedas* purposely teach contradictory theories. However, such contradictions are found only in the descriptions of creation, they never occur when the *Vedas* attempt to describe the nature of Self, the Supreme. Concerning Self, they all agree and speak in one voice, saying 'Self is One, Perfect, Whole, Immortal, Unchanging, Self-shining etc., etc.' From this we should understand that the deep intention behind such conflicting theories of creation is to indirectly show aspirants the necessity of enquiring into Self, which is the Source of all ideas of creation.

9 The Part Played by God

103. By His own Power of *Maya*, the Unchanging One, [though shining more directly than anything else], hides Himself unseen, and throws the rope of the three states into the space of the mind; keeping it upright. He then makes the *jiva*, who mistakes the body as 'I', balance on it, and thus He plays His divine game!

Sadhu Om: The three states are waking, dreaming and deep sleep.

A magician's trick performed by village entertainers in India is used as a simile here. The magician, hiding himself behind a screen, throws a rope into the air and, making it appear to stand upright, he orders his assistant to climb it and balance on its top. Here, God is equated to the magician; the Heart is His hiding place; the three states are compared to the rope; and the *jiva* is compared to the assistant. But all of this is a game, only appearing in the onlookers' sight, and hence it is unreal. Similarly, creation, sustenance and dissolution, which appear to be God's '*Lila*' [i.e. divine game] are all unreal, as they are seen only by the ignorant.

104. In the view of the ignorant it may sometimes appear as if the Supreme Lord, who gave power of authority to *Maya*, is Himself bound by her deceitful orders [to delude *jivas*].

Sadhu Om: The significance of saying that the Lord gives power of

authority to *Maya* is the experience of an aspirant who, while abiding as Self, becomes inattentive and allows the 'I'-thought to arise. If this rising of the 'I'-thought is once allowed, it is then no wonder that even God and the *Jnani* will also appear to be bound by the power of *Maya*; however, this appearance is false, being only in the view of the illusory 'I'-thought.

Even in the life of Bhagavan Sri Ramana there were some occasions when it seemed as if He approved of some of the foolish ideas of worldly-minded people, and as if He abided by the unnecessary conditions imposed by them. All these matters, however, only appeared so in the view of the ignorant.

105. Just as all beings, moving and unmoving, engage in their own activities due to the mere presence of the sun, which rises without any prior intention, so it is said in the scriptures that all actions are performed by God [who in truth neither acts nor has intentions].

106. In the mere presence of the sun, the convex lens emits fire, the lotus blossoms, the water-lily closes, and all creatures rise up, work and rest [according to their nature].

107. The five-fold phenomenon functions merely because of God's potent presence, just as the needle trembles near the magnet, or as in the light of the moon, the moonstone drips, the water lily blossoms and the lotus closes.

Michael James: The five-fold functions are creation, sustenance, dissolution, veiling and Grace.

The sun does not plan or order that living beings should work, but, each in his own way, makes use of the presence of the sun to do as they wish. So also, the Presence of God (i.e., the Presence of Self) is used by the mind of each person in his own way, either to do *karmas* and be bound by them, or to inquire into Being and be liberated. Just as the activities of nature cannot continue without the sun, so the five-fold phenomenon cannot function without the Grace (i.e. The Presence) of God or Self.

108. In the Presence of the Lord, who has no intention of His own, *jivas* busy themselves outwardly, treading

on various paths of action, and reap the fruits with justly result, until finally [realising the uselessness of action] they turn Selfward and attain Liberation.

Sadhu Om: Though the Lord's Presence is essential for either bondage or liberation to occur – according to our own wishes – He is not responsible for them.

109. Just as the [good and bad] incidents that happen on earth do not affect the sun, and as the properties of the four elements do not affect the vast ether, so also the actions [*karmas*] of *jivas* will certainly never affect God, who is beyond the mind.

Michael James: The properties of the four elements are:

Earth – size and weight
Water – coolness and fluidity
Fire – heat
Wind – movement and speed

10 The Three Prime Entities [God, World and Soul]

110. If one enquires to the very end, "Who is this *jiva*, 'I'?" it will be found that he is non-existent, and Shiva will be revealed as being nothing but the Supreme Expanse of Consciousness. Thus, when the *jiva* – the seer, who with great desire saw this world – has disappeared, it is ridiculous to attribute reality to the world – the seen.

Sadhu Om: Since the truth of the seer and the seen are one and the same, when the seer [i.e., the *jiva*] is found to be unreal, the seen will also be known to be unreal. The true nature of Self [which was hitherto conceived, in this trinity, as being God] will then be found to be the only reality.

111. After the above two prime entities [i.e. world and *jiva*] have disappeared, that which alone remains shining is Shiva [i.e. Self]. But although This is the absolute Truth, how can the already dead *jiva* think of It as being non-dual?

Sadhu Om: Since the Truth of Non-duality [*Advaita*] is beyond thought, Bhagavan Ramana used to say that *Advaita* cannot be called a religion, because '*mata*' [religion] is that which is found by '*mati*' [the mind]. See verse 993.

112. If world and *jiva* are said to be eternal and real, it would then mean a flaw in the Wholeness of the Supreme Lord. Unless we accept that the Lord is imperfect and divided, we cannot say that world and *jiva* are real.

Sadhu Om: Those schools of thought, such as *Dwaita* and *Vishishtadwaita*, which say that world and *jiva* are real, should accept that they are thus degrading God as a partial reality, or else they should give up their dualistic ideas.

113. If *jiva*, the reflected Consciousness, is really an entity separate from the Supreme, then the declaration of the Sage, "Shiva does all, *jivas* do nothing", would be merely an imagination, and not based upon their experience.

Michael James: As it would be absurd to suggest that Sages make imaginary statements not based upon their experience, it cannot be correct to conclude that *jiva* is a real entity separate from the Supreme.

114. When the limited light [which is used to project pictures on the cinema screen] is dissolved in the bright sunlight [which enters the cinema], the pictures also will disappear instantaneously. Similarly, when the limited consciousness [*chittam*] of the mind is dissolved in supreme Consciousness [*Chit*], the picture show of these three prime entities [God, world and soul] will also disappear.

Michael James: See verses 10, 11 and 70.

115. Thus, since the Truth of the Source is One, why do all religions [and sometimes even Sages] start their teachings by at first conceding that these three prime entities are real? Because the mind, which is tossed

about by objective knowledge, would not agree to believe in the One unless the Sages condescended to teach It as three.

Michael James: See verse 2 of *Ulladu Narpadu*.

11 Veiling

116. Know that the thick veiling of a *jiva's* forgetfulness about all the troubles caused to others or by others during his innumerable past lives is due to the Grace of God [for his own peace of mind].

117. When the remembrance of even a few miserable instances in this lifetime can make one's life a hell, should not forgetfulness alone be loved by all?

Sadhu Om: In the above two stanzas Sri Bhagavan advises us that it is foolish to try to know about our past births. Both pain and pleasure are mere thoughts, originating from the root 'I'-thought, which is misery itself; hence, since no true happiness can come from misery, to forget the pain and pleasures of the past is alone bliss.

12 Individuality

118. Individual Gods and Goddesses and their particular powers will appear to be real only in the imagination of those minds which admire them. Such mental delusion is at all times completely non-existent for Self, which transcends the mind.

119. It is only due to the false sense-bound knowledge of the ignorant that they say that *Muktas* who have realized the Truth have individuality [*vyakti*]. Truly, universality [*avyakti*] is the real state of a *Jnani*, whose nature is the Expanse of Consciousness; the individuality seen in Him by devotees is a reflection of their own individuality.

Sadhu Om: In this verse it is stressed that people who say, "Not only do we know that the *Jnani* is an individual, but even He feels that He has individuality" are totally wrong; what they see in Him is merely the reflection of their own nature.

120. That which shines in the heart of an earnest aspirant as the Supreme Reality is mere *Jnana* itself. Why therefore, after the annihilation of the ego, point out "This One is a great *Jnani*, and that One is another"? Are They merely the bodies?

Michael James: Appendix 3, 'Who is a *Jnani*?' in *The Path of Sri Ramana, Part 1*, will explain in more detail this verse and the following two.

121. With great eagerness and wonder you fly to see one *Mahatma* here and another *Mahatma* there! If you inquire, attain and know the *Maha-Atma* [i.e. the Great Self] within your own heart, then every *Mahatma* is none other than that One [within you].

122. Whatever high and wonderful state of *tapas* one may have attained, if one still identifies oneself with an individuality, one cannot be a *Sahaja-Jnani* [i.e. One in the State of Effortlessness]; one is only an aspirant of, perhaps, an advanced stage.

Sadhu Om: The intention behind Sri Bhagavan's instructions to us in this verse is that we should each of us see for ourselves whether or not we have the notion of individuality, ignoring the fact that others may call us a *Jnani* or an *ajnani*, and that we should try, on this principle, to set ourselves right. This verse is not intended to give us a yardstick with which to measure others as *Jnanis* or *ajnanis*.

123. Leaving aside that true Self-Consciousness, which is devoid of the least feeling of individuality, and displaying any number of *siddhis*, is a sheer waste. Who but those fools who are incapable of knowing Self, will desire these senseless *siddhis*?

Sadhu Om: A *Jnani* will not feel himself to be the doer of any *siddhis* which, according to *prarabdha*, He may appear to display; they will not therefore make Him proud and happy, and despite them, He will remain as ever, revelling in Self. Refer to verse B2 (169) of this work, which is also verse 15 of *Ulladu Narpadu* [*Reality Revealed in Forty Verses*] Supplement.

124. The *Jnani*, the Formless One who ever abides as the

Supreme Self, is a collected totality of all individual *siddhis*. All the *siddhis* which function through them are His alone, since He is the witness of them. Know Him as none other than Lord Dakshinamurti!

Sadhu Om: The *Jnani* is described as 'the Formless One'.

Since individual *siddhas*, even if they possess all the eight-fold *siddhis*, are unable to display them proudly in front of a *Jnani*, who possesses *Atma-Siddhi* [i.e., abidance in Self], which is the highest of all *siddhis*, they are said to be contained within Him. Since the *Jnani* is the Self of God, from whom *siddhas* borrow their powers, all *siddhis* are here said to be His alone.

The *Jnani* is neither a *Murti* [i.e., the form of an individual God], nor even an *Avatar* or *Amsa* [i.e., an aspect or part] of the *Trimurthis* [i.e., the three Gods of Creation, Sustenance and Dissolution]. Since the *Jnani*, the *Guru-Murti*, is above the *Trimurthis*, He is described here as Lord Dakshinamurti, the Primal Guru.

13 Association with the Unreal

B1. Give up thinking that the loathsome body is 'I'. Know Self, which is eternal Bliss. Cherishing the ephemeral body as well as trying to know Self is just like using a crocodile as a raft to cross a river.

Michael James: Some of the verses in this work were composed by Bhagavan himself. They are numbered independently of the main work as B1, B2, B3, etc. The B stands for Bhagavan. This particular verse also appears as verse twelve in *Ulladu Narpadu Anubandham*.

Sadhu Om: The phrase "Cherishing the ephemeral body" is liable to be misunderstood by aspirants; Sri Bhagavan merely intends to give a warning through this verse to those aspirants who believe that, in order to realise Self, they must live a long life in a healthy body. Such people sometimes go to extremes and, calling themselves yogis, waste most of their waking life doing certain yoga practices and preoccupying themselves to the point of hypochondria with a concern about *sattvic* diet, physical cleanliness, handsome appearance, good health and so on. These foolish people, as a result, are merely a trouble to their benefactors and useless parasites on society.

However, Bhagavan does not intend to deny the necessity or wisdom of taking a reasonable and moderate care of physical needs. A wise shopkeeper's aim should not be merely to pay the rent on his shop, but should be to earn a large profit on top of the rent; similarly, an aspirant's aim should not be merely to provide food, clothing and shelter [the rent] for his body [the shop], he must remember that his business in this body is Self-enquiry, and his aim is to make the worthy profit of Self-Knowledge. However, if the rent is not paid for this body, the business cannot thrive. On the other hand, however, paying the rent [i.e., providing these necessities] should not become the sole endeavour of our whole life; the major portion of our attention must be aimed directly at attaining Self-Knowledge, while attending to a bare minimum of the necessities. Excessive anxiety about the physical necessities of life is like clinging to a crocodile which, instead of acting as a raft to help us cross the river of *samsara*, will swallow us, making all our futile efforts come to nothing.

125. Those who show great care and love for their bodies, while saying that they are trying to know Self, are like one who tries to cross a river, mistaking a crocodile for a log.

126. Instead of attending to *Sat-Chit-Ananda*, the subtlest, which is beyond the reach of speech or mind, to spend one's life attending merely to the welfare of the gross body is just like drawing water with great difficulty from a well in order to water some useless grass [instead of paddy].

127. Those who take to the petty life, mistaking the body as 'I', have lost, so to speak, the great life of unlimited Bliss in the Heart, which is ever waiting to be experienced by them.

128. Not knowing that the world in front of them brings only great harm, those who take it to be real and a source of happiness will drown in the ocean of birth and death, like one who takes hold of a floating bear as a raft.

Sadhu Om: If someone has caught hold of a floating bear, without knowing its true nature but hoping that it will serve as a raft, he will

find it very difficult to leave it, even when he has discovered his mistake, since the bear will also have caught hold of him; similarly, even though someone has heard from the Guru that the world is a false appearance, he finds it very difficult to leave it aside, because of the tendencies of attraction which he created by his great desire for it, when he took it to be real. Such is the strength of the mind's attachment to this world!

129. Just as the movements of a vehicle in which one is sitting is wrongly taken to be one's own movements, so also those who do not have Self-Knowledge suffer from the delusion of mistaking the birth and death [i.e., *samsara*] experience by the ego as their [Self's] own [birth and death].

130. If the ignorant one, who is clinging to the body and world as real, wants to have peace, he should, giving up his wrong notion, cling like an *udumbu* to Self in his heart.

Michael James: An *udumbu* is a giant lizard found in India which grows up to three feet in length; its peculiarity is that it is able to cling to the flat surface of a wall so firmly that a man holding it can lift himself up.

131. Those who live the life of an ego, desirously entertaining themselves with the pleasures of false sense objects, will be doomed to delusion. The only life worth living is revelling in the Supreme Consciousness – that is, being Self.

14 The *Pandit*

132. Why do many of you call me a *Pandit*? The correct sign of the real *Pandit* is the knowledge that the knower of the all the arts and sciences is non-existent, and that all he has learnt throughout the past ages is therefore mere ignorance.

Sadhu Om: Here Sri Bhagavan is objecting to those who call Him a great *Pandit* simply because they see in Him poetical genius, fluent knowledge of the scriptures, a wonderful power of memory, sharp intelligence, skill in argument, acquaintance with many lan-

guages, medical knowledge, architectural skill, and so on. He denies that one who has learnt all the arts and sciences is a true *Pandit*. The ego, the wrong knowledge that "I am the body" is itself the primal ignorance, so how can the learning acquired by such ignorance be true knowledge? The knowledge of anything but Self is therefore mere ignorance.

However, Sri Bhagavan is Himself the true *Pandit*, because of His Self-Knowledge. He who is able to discriminate and understand this is alone fit to take to Self-enquiry and gain Self-Knowledge, thus qualifying himself to be called a true *Pandit*.

133. Enquiring, "Who is this 'I' that has learnt all these arts and sciences?", and thereby reaching the Heart, the ego vanishes along with all its learning. He who knows the remaining Self-Consciousness is the true *Pandit*; how can others who have not realised It be *Pandits*?

134. Those who have learnt to forget all that was learnt, and to abide within, are alone the Truth-Knowers. Others, who remember everything, will suffer with anxiety, being deluded by the false *samsara*.

Sadhu Om: The knowledge of all the sixty-four arts and sciences are nothing but the fruit of thinking, and thinking and forgetting are properties of the mind, which is lost in the State of Self-Knowledge, where Oneness prevails and where neither remembering nor forgetting take place. Bliss alone shines in this State, and only he who has learnt to experience this Bliss is the real *Pandit*.

135. O scholar, you who bow your head in shame in front of a *Jnani* when He asks you, "Oh, poor soul, who are you that has learnt all [these arts and sciences]?", may your ignorant mind be damned.

Sadhu Om: The strong-sounding words used here by Sri Bhagavan – "may your ignorant mind be damned" – should be understood to be a blessing rather than a curse, since the aim of the aspirant is the damnation (i.e., the total annihilation) of his own mind. Refer also to *Upadesa Manjari* [*Spiritual Instruction*] Chapter 1, Question 4.

136. One who is permanently established in Self-Consciousness – having destroyed delusion, which is in the form of doubt and misunderstanding – is the Supreme *Pandit*.

137. Know that he who, by annihilating the ego, knows the Supreme Thing as It is – that is as the real 'I am', which is the noun 'I', Self's natural name, shining together with the verb 'Am' – is the true spotless *Pandit*.

15 The Poet

138. Responding with a melting heart for the past wrong use of his tongue in wretched human praise, let the poet live gloriously, taking to the new resolution, 'I will no more sing in praise of any human being, but to the glory of God alone'.

139. Those who, instead of dedicating to God's Feet the poetic flow which they achieved by His Grace, squander it in unworthy human praise are, alas, like those who compel their daughter, the tongue's eloquence, to take to prostitution.

Michael James: The words 'their daughter, the tongue's eloquence' may alternatively be translated as 'the Goddess of Eloquence [Saraswati]'.

140. The divine flow of poetry can spring only from a heart which has become still, being completely freed by Self-attention from all attachment towards the five sheaths, starting with *Annamaya* [the body composed of food].

16 The Vanity of Learning

141. After knowing that the purport at the heart of all scripture is that the mind should be subdued in order to gain Liberation, what is the use in continuously studying them? Who am I?

142. If those who are unfit even to live a life of religious morality, take to a critical study of *Vedanta*, it is nothing but a pollution of the purity of *Vedanta*.

Muruganar: This verse emphasises that the purity of mind and heart is essential for those who take to the study of Vedanta.

143. For those who are very attached to their filthy bodies, all the study of *Vedanta* will be as useless as the swinging of the goat's fleshly beard unless, with the aid of Divine Grace, their studies lead them to subdue their egos.

144. To be freed from ignorance by mere studies is as impossible as the horns of a horse, unless by some means the mind is killed and the tendencies are thus completely erased by the blossoming of Self-Knowledge.

Sadhu Om: Readers should remember that Bhagavan Sri Ramana recommended Self-enquiry and self-surrender as the only two means by which the Truth may be known. The result of both these methods is both *mano-nasha* [death of the mind] and *vasana-kshaya* [eradication of the tendencies].

145. For the *jiva's* weak and unsteady mind, which is ever wavering like the wind, there is no place to enjoy bliss except the Heart, its Source; the study of scriptures is, for it, like a noisy *shandai* [a cattle fair].

Sadhu Om: The arts are merely the skilful play of mental modifications [*mano-vrittis*]; just as flowing rivers roar wildly until reaching their original source, the ocean, where they become peaceful and silent, so also the restlessly moving mind will not find peace and silence until, giving up such *vrittis*, it returns and abides in its Source. Refer also to verse 8 of *Arunachala Ashtakam [The Eight Stanzas to Arunachala]*.

146. Rooting out useless sense-desires is possible only for those expert enquirers who, giving up the vast *Vedas* and *Agamas*, know through Self-enquiry, the Truth within the Heart.

Michael James: The phrase '*Vedas* and *Agamas*' refers to the portion of the scriptures that teaches ritualistic actions for achieving desired ends.

147. Though one learns the blemishless *Jnana Sastras* perfectly and with great enthusiasm, one has to forget, give up and be free of them when one tries to abide as Self.

Sadhu Om: It is necessary to have great enthusiasm for studying during the time of *Sravana* [i.e., hearing from the scriptures and the Guru], but this desire and enthusiasm will fade away during the time of *Manana* [i.e., reflection upon these teachings], because the ideas will then lose their novelty owing to one's complete conviction in them. However, during the time of *Nididhyasana* [i.e. practice], when the aspirant tries to turn Selfward, he finds that the scriptures learnt by him tend to rise as obstructing thoughts, due to the power of *Sastra vasanas*. Thus, even the divine scriptures have to be discarded and forgotten, while the aspirant tries to remain alone and merge into the Heart.

17 The Greatness of *Vedanta*

148. Worldly people, deluded by sensual pleasures which lead to destruction, cannot know of the existence of the Truth. They call the fertile glory of the aspirant's blossoming *Jnana*, which was attained by dispassion towards sense-pleasures, as the 'barren ground philosophy'.

149. The experience of *Vedanta* is possible only for those who have completely given up all desires. For the desirous it is far away, and they should therefore try to rid themselves of all other desires by the desire for God, who is free from desires.

Sadhu Om: The term *Vedanta* is commonly understood to mean a particular system of philosophy, but its true meaning is the experience of *Jnana* which is gained as the conclusion [*anta*] of the *Vedas*.

The desire for sense objects, which are all 2nd or 3rd persons, is directly opposed to the desire for God, and so it is quite clear that God is not merely one among the many 2nd and 3rd personal objects, but that He must be the Reality of the 1st person. Therefore, we should understand that discarding all desires for 2nd and 3rd personal objects and having love for Self alone is the true

devotion towards God. Verse B13 [731] also asserts this same point.

18 The Workings of *Prarabdha*

150. The Wise, who know that all worldly experiences are formed by *prarabdha* alone, never worry about their life's requirements. Know that all one's requirements will be thrust upon one by *prarabdha*, whether one wills them or not.

151. Every *jiva* experiences his own *prarabdha*, which is catalysed by the mere Presence of Shiva as the Witness dwelling in the heart of each one. Hence, the *jiva* who does not delude himself by thinking that he is the experiencer of *prarabdha*, but knows that he is mere Existence-Consciousness, is none but Shiva.

Michael James: Refer here to verse 1190.

19 The Power of *Prarabdha*

152. Just as the dark shadow at the foot of a lamp ever remains unmoving, so delusive egos of some are not lost even though, due to their destiny [*prarabdha*], they live, grow old and die at the Feet of the *Jnana*-Guru, the unlimited Light of Knowledge; this is perhaps because of their immaturity.

Michael James: The immaturity referred to here is the lack of the desire to abandon the ego, because liberation can never be attained without *bhakti*, which is the strong yearning in the aspirant to lose his ego. Thus this verse could more fittingly be included in chapter 21 '*The Power of Vasanas*'. Or with verse 605 in *Apaka Tiran*.

153. Why is it that, even if one wishes, it is not possible to achieve the eight-fold *siddhis* as well as Self-Knowledge? Because wealth and wisdom, being contrary to each other, will not generally be gained together in this world.

Michael James: If *siddhis* appear together with *Jnana*, they are due to the *kamya karmas* performed in a previous life-time, while

the individual was still in the dark grips of ignorance. Thus, since *siddhis* are according to *prarabdha* [one of the three *karmas*, which are all based upon the ego], and since *Jnana* destroys the ego, it is opposed to *siddhis*. Moreover, as *Jnana* is based upon Self and not upon the ego, it is not bound by any of the three *karmas*.

Sri Muruganar: Therefore it is not necessarily true, as some say, that all *siddhas* should be *Jnanis* and all *Jnanis* should have siddhis, or, as some others say, that *siddhas* cannot be *Jnanis* and *Jnanis* cannot have *siddhis*.

20 The Nature of the Ego and of Self

154. The nature of the ego is similar to that of an elf, being very enthusiastic, rising in many wicked ways by means of innumerable imaginations, being erratic in behaviour, and knowing only things other than itself. But the nature of Self is mere Existence-Consciousness.

21 The power of *Vasanas*

155. Some *jivas* suffer, being often thrown back into the eddying stream of *samsara* by their *vasanas*, which are like mischievous boys not allowing them to cling fast to Self, the bank [of *samsara's* stream].

Sadhu Om: Small creatures, trying to climb out of the dangerous eddies of a stream, are sometimes pushed back again by mischievous boys; this is used as a simile for those *jivas* who, while trying to cling to Self-Attention, find themselves being constantly pulled back by their *vasanas* into *samsara*, the eddying stream of worldly thoughts.

22 The Ego-Knot

156. The reason for our mistake of seeing a world of objects in front of us is that we have risen as a separate 'I', the seer, due to our failure to attend to the vast perfection of Self-Consciousness, which is our Reality.

Sadhu Om: When our unlimited Existence is mistakenly confined by identification with the limited body, our own Self appears as the world and God, which seem to be entities separate from 'I', the

seer. However, these separate objects appear only in the view of the ego, and not in the view of Self. This same idea is also expressed in verse 158.

157. The false, deceitful and self-blinded ego-knot, believing the body to be real, lusts after various allurements which are all fancied like the blueness of the sky, and thus it tightens itself.

158. It is only the sight which is blind to the unlimited Self, having veiled itself as "I am the body", that also appears as the world before it.

159. The life of the filthy ego, which mistakes a body both as 'I' and as 'my place', is merely a false imagination seen as a dream in the pure, real, Supreme Self.

160. This fictitious *jiva*, who lives as 'I [am the body]', is also one of the pictures on the screen.

Michael James: Compare verse 1218.

Sadhu Om: The *jiva*, our false being, is a mere projection upon the screen of our true Being, Self. In a cinema picture showing the scene of a royal court, the king is seen viewing his court; just as he appears to be a seer, though in fact he is one of the insentient pictures [i.e., the seen], so also the *jiva* appears to be a seer viewing the world, though in fact he is also one of the insentient pictures projected on the screen of Self. Refer to verse 871 and note.

23 The Might of the Ego

161. Only when the ego is destroyed does one become a Devotee; only when the ego is destroyed does one become a *Jnani*; only when the ego is destroyed does one become God; and only when the ego is destroyed does Grace blaze forth.

Sadhu Om: Since the rising of the ego is the root of all pride, it is the only obstruction to our being a truly humble slave and servant to God, and therefore its annihilation is the only true sign of a real *Bhakta* [Devotee] or *Karma Yogi*. Since the ego is itself the root and the primal form of ignorance, its annihilation alone is the Supreme *Jnana*. Since the ego [i.e., the feeling 'I am the body'] is the cause of the feeling of separation from God, its annihilation

alone is the true *Yoga* [i.e., union with God]. Since the ego is the root and the primal form of wretchedness, its annihilation is the only true manifestation of blessed Grace. It is thus shown that the aim of all the four *Yogas* is the annihilation of the ego.

162. He who has destroyed the ego is alone the true *Sannyasin* and the true Brahmin; but, hard indeed is the complete destruction of the heavy burden of the ego borne by those *Sannyasins* who feel "I belong to the highest *ashrama*" and by those brahmins who feel "I belong to the highest caste".

Sadhu Om: The true *Sannyasa* is the renunciation of the ego and the true Brahminhood is the realization of *Brahman* [i.e., the Self], and thus both the words *Sannyasin* and *Brahmin* mean one who has destroyed the ego. But as *ashramas* [orders of life] and *varnas* [castes] pertain only to the body, only those who identify themselves with their bodies can feel that they belong to the highest *ashrama* [known as *Sannyasa*] or to the highest *varna* [known as Brahminhood]. Such feelings naturally create pride and strengthen the ego, and therefore the higher the *ashrama* or *varna*, the heavier the burden of the ego, and the harder its eradication.

163. One who sees otherness and multiplicity cannot become a *Parppan* merely because he has learnt the four *Vedas*. But one who sees his own [ego's] death is the true *Parppan*; the other one [i.e. the caste *Brahmin*] is inwardly shamed, being despised by the Wise.

Michael James: *Parppan* literally means 'a seer', that is, one who knows the truth, but it is commonly used to mean a caste brahmin.

164. The complete eradication of the ego is indeed very hard when even in the case of Kannappa, whose love for Lord Shiva was so great that he plucked out his own eyes and planted them on the Lord's face, there remained [until that moment] a trace of body attachment [i.e. ego] in the form of his pride concerning his beautiful bright eyes.

Sadhu Om: At times Sri Bhagavan used to reveal some information which was not given by the scriptures and *Puranas* such as:

a) how, in the *Bhagavad Gita*, Sri Krishna began His teachings with the doctrines of *Ajata* and *Advaita*, but then condescendingly came down to various stages of *Dwaita*, and how He carefully used words which, though suited to Arjuna's limited grasping power, also gives room for well-ripened aspirants to discover, even now, the motive behind those words.

b) how at first, Sri Dakshinamurti answered His disciples' doubts with wise and convincing replies before he took to his method of teaching through Silence.

c) the following variation on the story of Kannappa: Kannappa was proud of his eyes, which were very beautiful, so, according to the divine saying, "I will forcibly deprive my true devotee of all his possessions so that his mind may always cling to me", Lord Shiva tested Kannappa by making him offer even his treasured and enviable eyes to the Lord. Thus even his slight attachment to his body was removed and he was absorbed in Shiva.

As this information about Kannappa's attachment to his beautiful eyes was not revealed by the *Puranas*, but only by Sri Bhagavan Ramana, we can infer that He is none other than Shiva, who faced Kannappa at that time.

This information about Kannappa, which continues in the next verse also, was gathered by Sri Muruganar. The information about Sri Krishna's teaching was recorded in verse 101 of this same work, and also in *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, talk, nos. 264, 364 and 611. The information about Sri Dakshinamurti's verbal teaching has not been recorded elsewhere so the reader may ask Sri Bhagavan's early devotees for the full story.

Editor's note: These words were written more than twenty years ago. Since that time the story of Dakshinamurti has appeared in *The Mountain Path*, 1982, pp. 11-12. It will also appear in a few months in *Padamalai*, in the chapter of 'The Guru'.

165. The real glory of Shiva Bhakti is the salvation of the devotee from the damnation caused by the delusion "I am this filthy body". This is the reason why Shiva accepted Kannappa's eyes when he offered them.

24 The Ego's Play

166. When properly scrutinized, God's ordinance amounts to this: If the ego rises, all things rise; if it subsides, they all subside.

Sadhu Om: Refer to the last paragraph of *Who Am I?*

167. The delusion-bound ego-life, led by all creatures in the three worlds, is nothing but the dance of ghouls who possess corpses in a cremation ground.

168. Listen, here is a great wonder; people who cannot even think unless empowered to do so by the Supreme Power [*Chit-Shakti*] are performing *karmas* with great eagerness and zeal!

169. This is much like the zeal of the cripple who declared, "If someone will only lift and support me, I will meet the host of enemies single handed, lay them low, and raise a pile of corpses here".

Michael James: The above two verses are condensed and summarised by Bhagavan in the following verse.

B2. The futile activities of those madmen who, not realising that they themselves are activated by the Supreme Power, make efforts thinking, "Let us acquire all the *siddhis*", are like [the efforts] of the cripple in the story who boasted, "If anyone will help me stand, what worth will my enemies have before me?"

Michael James: This verse also appears as verse fifteen of *Ulladu Narpadu Anubandham*.

170. If, of their own accord, even the Wind God could not stir, nor could the Fire God burn a wisp straw, how can an ordinary *jiva* do anything at all with its separate ego-strength?

Michael James: These analogies are based upon a saying in the *Kenopanishad*.

171. Having its Self-Knowledge veiled by illusion, being

bound by the fruits of sinful *karmas*, and suffering, having lost sight of the Supreme, the ego's play is a mere mockery, like the sculpture of the Supreme which appears to carry the temple tower.

172. Would passengers, if wise, carry their luggage on their own heads, while travelling on a train which hauls, under steam-power, the heaviest loads like wisps of straw?

173. Similarly, since, by it's very nature, the Supreme Power alone sustains all things, it is wise for men to leave the burdens [cares and anxiety] of their life on that Supreme Power, and thus to feel free.

Michael James: Refer also to *Who am I?* for the above two sayings. The above three verses were summarised in the following verse by Bhagavan:

B3. Look! While God is bearing the responsibility of the whole world, it is a mockery for the false *jiva* to think that it shoulders these responsibilities, like the sculpture which appears to carry the temple-tower. Whose fault is it if a passenger in a train, which is hauling a heavy load, suffers by keeping his luggage on his head instead of placing it on the rack?

Michael James: This verse also appears as verse seventeen of *Ulladu Narpadu* Anubandham.

Are there not among us some aspirants who, seeing the sufferings in this world, make efforts to reform it or even to heavenize it? But here Sri Bhagavan exposes the foolishness of such aspirants and advises them to surrender to God all their cares, both for themselves and for the world, and to remain quiet!

174. One's fear and quaking of one's body while one is entering *samadhi* is due to the slight ego-consciousness still remaining. But when this dies completely, without leaving even a trace, one abides as the vast space of mere consciousness where Bliss alone prevails, and the quaking stops.

Sadhu Om: The annihilation of the ego is alone the realization of

Self, so when an aspirant's attachment to his body is being removed through enquiry, he [i.e. the ego] will feel that he is going to die, hence some aspirants experience during their *sadhana* a fear of death and sometimes even a physical shaking or great heat, and so in this verse Sri Bhagavan clears the aspirant's doubts and explains these phenomena.

175. The only worthy occupation is to thoroughly absorb the ego by turning Selfward and, without allowing it to rise, to thus abide quietly, like a waveless ocean, in Self-Knowledge, having annihilated the delusive mind-ghost, which had been wandering about unobstructed.

176. The truly powerful *tapas* is that state in which, having lost the sense of doership, and knowing well that all is His Will, one is relieved from the delusion of the foolish ego. Thus should you know.

Michael James: The last sentence may also mean, 'Therefore, acquire such *tapas*'.

25 Treason Against Self

177. To be deluded and without Self-knowledge, and to thus see all the worlds and the *jivas* therein as different from oneself, is truly doing treason against Self, that vast Space of Consciousness in whose view nothing is other than Itself, and which absorbs everything into Itself.

Sadhu Om: The rising of an individual 'I' [ego or *jiva*] is the reason why Self is seen as many things. Therefore, since it seems to spoil the true Oneness of Self, the ego's rising is considered to be treason against Self.

26 Heaven and Hell

178. O men, do not argue and quarrel amongst yourselves about the reality of heaven and hell. As long as and as far as this present world is real, till then and to that extent heaven and hell are also real.

Sadhu Om: Many of us take great interest in arguing about the

reality and existence of other worlds such as heaven and hell, and whether or not they are mere mytho-poetic imaginations. Sri Bhagavan, however, points out that all such arguments are based on a false premise, namely the reality of our own existence. "As the eye, so is the sight": Hence, believing oneself, the seer, to be real we conclude that the world, the seen, is also real. But only when, through Self-Knowledge we find the seer to be unreal, can we truly know that this and all other worlds are also unreal. Until then we have no true premise on which to judge the reality of this or of other worlds, and, therefore, it is right to concede the same degree of reality to all worlds, whether seen or unseen, as we give to the seer of them.

179 If those geniuses who assert, "Yes, this world and body which we see do really exist," would sit and scrutinize [this matter] with me, I would certainly point out to them, "Yes, not only does this world really exist, but also do other worlds such as heaven and hell!"

Sadhu Om: Even scientists have nowadays come to understand that the things which we perceive through the five senses cannot be said to exist objectively in the same manner as they appear to us, and that, because the senses cannot reveal things as they really are, it is wrong to believe the senses and to decide the world exists as we see it.

In this verse, although those who assert the reality of this world are ironically called geniuses by Sri Bhagavan, why, instead of advising them that the world is unreal, does He join them in saying that it is real? There are two reasons why even *Jnanis*, who have realised the world-appearance to be illusory, say that the world is real:

1) The *Jnani* never sees Himself as an unreal and insignificant *jiva*, but only as the real, unlimited and pure Awareness. Since His outlook is that of *Brahman*, He will say according to the saying "As the eye, so is the sight" – that the universe is real.

2) If the truth were told that this world and the others, such as heaven and hell, are all unreal, the ignorant, who do not know the Absolute Truth [due to the power of their *vasanas*, in the form of worldly desires], would lose all fear of doing evil actions and all

interest in doing *punya karmas* [meritorious actions]. So, it is in the best interest of the ignorant that they should be told that evil actions done in this world will take them to hell and virtuous actions will take them to heaven.

Therefore, while the modern mind takes the present world and the incidents happening here to be real, it is definitely wrong for anyone to believe that all the worlds and incidents mentioned in the *Puranas* are unreal, or for anyone to say that we may regard these things as mere 'mytho-poetic' imaginations.

Refer also to *The Bhagavad Gita*, Chapter 3, verse 26.

27 The Terror of Hell

180. Only those who do not know the nature of misery are terrified of the tortures of hell. But if one understands what misery is, one will know the way to end it, and will certainly attain one's natural state of Bliss.

Michael James: A thorough scrutiny will reveal that the nature of misery is the rising of 'I', the ego, since no misery is experienced in deep sleep, where there is no rising of the ego. The way to eradicate misery is therefore to not allow the rising of the ego, which can only be prevented by vigilant Self-attention. Hence, the enquiry "Who am I?" is the only means to end all misery.

28 The Conquest of Hell (Naraka)

181. The *Puranas* say that Lord Narayana has killed the demon [of misery], Naraka Asura. This demon is none other than the one who lives as "I am this body, the source of misery". One who seeks Naraka Asura's [i.e., the ego's] source, and thus annihilates him, is truly Lord Narayana Himself.

182. The *Deepavali*-bath, which is taken by all people on the fourteenth moon in remembrance of the conquest of Naraka, signifies the bath of *Jnana*, which is taken after destroying the ego Naraka Asura, by searching for his source.

Michael James: *Deepavali* or *Naraka Chaturdasi* is an annual festival celebrated in India on the fourteenth day of the waning moon in October or November. In this verse Sri Bhagavan explains the

significance of the oil bath which is customarily taken by people on the morning of that day in remembrance of the conquest of Naraka-Asura by Lord Narayana [Maha-Vishnu].

The above two verses were summarised in the following verse by Sri Bhagavan:

B4. He who kills Narakasura (the ego) with the Wheel [i.e. weapon] of *Jnana*, by enquiring, "Where is the source of Narakasura who rules over Narakaloka, this wretched body, as 'I'?", is Lord Narayana; and that day [of the ego's destruction] is the auspicious day of the fourteenth moon.

183. *Deepavali* signifies the great Self-Effulgence which shines after destroying the reflected light [i.e. the ego], Narakasura, who was ruling this filthy body, which is the form of hell, as 'I'.

Michael James: *Deepavali* means the "Festival of Lights". The above verse which explains the significance of the "Lights" [i.e. the firecrackers used on that day] was rewritten as follows by Sri Bhagavan with only a slight change in the meaning, but in poetry which was clearer and more beautiful because of the precision of each syllable.

B5. *Deepavali* signified the shining of Self after the destruction, through enquiry, of the greatest sinner, Naraka [the ego], who took the abode of this filthy body, which is the form of hell, as 'I'.

28 The greatness of *Aham-mukha* (Self-Attention)

184. While Self, the Source and Reality of the ego – which can only know objects other than itself through its senses – alone should be clung to, all an aspirant's efforts to concentrate on other objects [which are all second and third persons], are just like ignoring something while trying to grasp its shadow.

Michael James: There are two possible translations of the next verse:

185a. For the extroverted intellect – which suffers greatly,

knowing through the senses only the objects of form and quality before it – the means to abide in Self is to begin enquiring inwardly, "Who am I?"

185b. For the extroverted intellect, the means to abide in Self is to begin enquiring inwardly "Who am I, who suffer greatly, knowing through the senses only the objects of form and quality before me?"

186. O miserable and extroverted people, failing to see the seer, you see only the seen! To dissolve duality by turning inwards instead of outwards is alone Blissful.

Sadhu Om: The terms "inward" and "outward" can be used only in reference to the body, but as the body is itself a mere imagination, such terms should not be taken literally. The reason for the use of these words is that the aspirant, in his ignorance, feels his body to be 'I', so on being told to "turn inwards" he should understand that the should "turn Selfwards," that is he should turn his attention towards what he feels as "I". In truth, Self is neither inside nor outside the body as it alone exists beyond all limitations such as time and space.

187. O mind, it is not wise for you to come out [in the form of thoughts]; it is best to go within. Hide yourself deep within the Heart and escape from the tricks of *Maya*, who tries to upset you by drawing you outwards.

Sadhu Om: The beginning of the verse may also be translated as, 'O mind, it is not wise for you to expose yourself to name and fame…'

188. [O mind,] do not waste your life in roaming outside, pursuing wonders and courting enjoyments; to know Self through Grace [Self-enquiry], and to thus abide firmly in the Heart, is alone worthwhile.

189. Since it is only the notion of duality that spoils Bliss and causes misery, to avoid yielding to the attractions of that notion and to thus arrest all *chitta vrittis* is alone worthwhile.

190. O people, not knowing that Shiva is dwelling within

you, you fly about like birds from one holy place to another [seeking His *Darshan*]. Consciousness, when abiding still in the Heart, is the Supreme Shiva.

Sadhu Om: To seek *Shiva Darshan* outside of oneself requires movement, but it is revealed here that to be still is the only true means of seeking it.

191. The ship would be destroyed by the storm if its sails were spread outside, but it is safe when its anchor is sunk deep into the sea. Similarly, if the mind were sunk deep in the Heart instead of being spread outside, that would be *Jnana*.

192. To arrest the mind – which tries to rush outwards – securely within, is the truly heroic act of the ripe aspirant who wants to see the Supreme Lord in the Heart.

Sadhu Om: The end of this verse may also be translated as, 'to see the Supreme, who is Lord of the Saints.'

193. When the mind [i.e., the ego's attention] which wanders outside, knowing only other objects [2nd and 3rd persons] – begins to attend to its own nature, all other objects will disappear, and then, by experiencing it's own true nature [i.e. Self], the pseudo-'I' will also die.

Sadhu Om: This verse clearly teaches that if the mind [i.e. the first person, 'I'] tries to attend to itself, not only will the 2nd and 3rd persons disappear, but the mind itself will also die. We are thus given here a complete description of the enquiry 'Who am I?' that is, we are told the method, what happens during the practice, and what result it will have.

30 The Kingdom of God

194. God does not reside in any place other than the Heart. It is due to illusion, caused by the ego, the 'I am the body' idea, that the Kingdom of God is conceived to be elsewhere. Be sure that the Heart is the kingdom of God.

Sadhu Om: Because we limit Ourself, and believe the tiny, unworthy body to be 'I', it becomes necessary to think that there is, apart from 'I' some glorious and almighty God, living in a wonderful and faraway Kingdom of His own, who creates this vast universe. In truth, however, since soul, world and God all sprout out and appear form 'I', the Source, both God and His Kingdom should be known to be Self. Refer also to the saying of Christ, "The Kingdom of God is within you". [Luke 17:21]

195. Know that you are the perfect, Shining Light which not only makes the existence of God's Kingdom possible, but also allows it to be seen as a wonderful heaven. To know this alone is *Jnana*. Therefore, the Kingdom of God is within you.

Sadhu Om: We are taught here that the worlds exist because 'we' exist, and that they are known because 'we' know our own existence as 'I am'. In short, our *Sat-Chit* [Existence-Consciousness] is the cause for the existence of the worlds and for the knowledge about them.

196. The unlimited Space of *Turiyatita* which shines suddenly, in all its fullness, within the Heart of a highly mature aspirant during the state of complete absorption of mind, as if a fresh and previously unknown experience, is the rarely attained and true *Shiva-Loka* [i.e., Kingdom of God], which shines by the Light of Self.

31 Siva (The Supreme)

197. Having eradicated the ego, which was wandering like a ghost in delusion, and having destroyed the duality of the sentient and the insentient, the soul which is thus drowned and well soaked in the light of the pure and blissful *Sahaja Samadhi*, is the Supreme Shiva.

198. When the ego, the feeling of being separate entity, is removed, *chittam* remains as *Shivam*, the Supreme *Chit*, having merged within the Heart as "I am Consciousness Itself", and having thus destroyed all the false and dense mental conceptions.

Sadhu Om: The syllable *tam* in *chittam* represents ignorance [*tamas* or darkness]; so when this *tam* is removed, pure *chit* alone remains. Refer also to verse 244.

199. That eternal and subtlest Being which pervades and transcends all is God, the Supreme *Shivam*, which is realised when the widely-scattered mind is resolved into its Source, having had its impurities removed and having been well refined.

32 The Oneness of Hara and Hari (Shiva and Vishnu)

200. It is generally said that He who gives *Jnana* to *jivas* is Hara, and that He who gives them heavenly pleasure is Hari. But since the unshakeable *Jnana* is itself God and the Highest Bliss, know that Hara and Hari are not two but One.

33 Shiva and Shakti

201. The primal and unique Self – the Source and Heart without which *Para-Shakti*, who functions in the form of mind, cannot have even the slightest existence – is the pure Shiva who shines in Chidambaram.

202. The Eternal Bliss, after reaching which the mind will cease wandering outwards, is Shiva, the mind-enchanter [*mano-ranjitam*] who is the Heart that gives the ever-fresh experience of *Jnana*.

203. The *chittams* of well-ripened aspirants are themselves the *gopikas* who were charmed with love. Know that the Heart which removes the ego's pride, just as the flame destroys the moth, is the gopikas' Beloved One [Sri Krishna].

Michael James: The gopikas are the girls who lived and played with Sri Krishna on the banks of the Jamuna.

34 Shiva Puja (Worshipping Shiva)

204. A peaceful attitude, together with a 'silent-flow' of mind towards undeviating abidance in Self, *Sat-Chit*, is the best worship of Shiva.

Sadhu Om: When the mind wanders outwards, away from the

Source it is actually disgracing Self, and so its undeviating abidance in the Self [its 'silent flow'] is here said to be the true worship of Self.

205. Saint Markandeya survived death by conquering even Yama, and lived beyond his destined time. Know, therefore, that death can be overcome by worshipping Shiva, the death-killer.

Michael James: In the story of Saint Markandeya, Shiva killed Yama, the God of death, and it is therefore said that by worshipping Shiva, death can be overcome. The true worship of Shiva is Self-abidance, as stated in verse 204 above, and since Self [Shiva] is beyond birth and death, by abiding as Self one conquers death and attains immortality.

206. Having obtained the non-dual view that all the eight forms of the universe, which are [mere] mental conceptions, are forms of God, to worship them properly is also a good Shiva-*puja*.

Sadhu Om: The eight forms of the universe are space, air, fire, water, earth, the sun, moon and *jivas*.

The non-dual view is obtained only after realising the oneness of Self, and until then an aspirant must rely upon his mental imagination to try and see and worship the eight forms as the forms of God. Such worship, relying upon the imagination, may be taken as good *Nishkama Karmas* [i.e., desireless action], which helps to purify the mind and to thus point the way to liberation, as taught by Sri Bhagavan in verses 3 and 5 of *Upadesa Saram*. However, since this worship is mere mental activity it cannot be counted as the highest and true *Shiva puja* mentioned in verses 204 and 205 above. Only the *Jnani* truly sees that the eight forms are not other than Self [God]. So, He alone can truly perform *Nishkama Karmas* or *Shiva-puja*.

Refer to *Maharshi's Gospel*, Part I, chapter 3, where Sri Bhagavan states, "An *Atma-Jnani* alone can be a good *karma-yogi*".

35 The Truth of *Namaskaram*

207. The significance of the imperfect *jiva's Namaskaram* [prostration], when he places his proud head beneath

the feet of the Guru or God, is that his ego-sense, "I am the body", is to be crushed by Self-Knowledge.

36 Idol Worship

208. O you that ridicule idol-worship, having not discovered through heart-melting love its secret, how is that you [daily] worship the filthy idol of your body as 'I'?

Sadhu Om: It is generally believed that idol worship is to mistake an idol as God and to treat it accordingly, offering it a bath, cloth, food, and all hospitality; but to mistake a body as Self, and to treat it accordingly, is also a form of idol worship. Indeed to treat and love a body as 'I' is the primal mistake which leads to all other forms of idol worship. So it is clear that we are all idol-worshippers, even if we take pride in scorning those that worship temple idols. As long as one takes one's body as 'I', there is no wrong in also worshipping an idol as God, and until one feels that it is wrong to treat one's body as 'I', one should not be scornful and criticize others for treating an idol as God. If one first roots out and destroys the 'I am the body' notion, one is then in a position to criticize idol worship, if such criticism is necessary [in the light of *Jnana* such criticism will of course be clearly seen as unnecessary].

37 *Vibhuti* (Holy Ash)

209. When the fictitious ego, who has accumulated tendencies from the beginningless past, is burnt by the Fire of *Jnana*, that Reality which alone remains within is the Sacred *Vibhuti*. This you should know.

Sadhu Om: *Vibhuti* represents Self, which alone shines after the ego's destruction.

210. The Supreme Lord having taken the form of the Guru, lights the Fire of *Jnana* **through His Supreme Speech [*Para Vak*], proclaiming without words the One Syllable, and thus burns the ego within the pure heart of His disciple. The *Vibhuti* He gives is the restoration of Self.**

Sadhu Om: *Vibhuti* is prepared by burning cowdung in an airtight

oven. In *Saiva Siddhanta* the *jiva* is generally known as the ‘cow’, so the cow-dung used here symbolises the *jiva’s vasanas*, which when burnt to ashes, leave only Self.

211. Those who wear such *Vibhuti* are unequalled in all respects in this world. Such *Vibhuti*, which is Reality, the thought-free and wonderful *Jnana*, is eternal divine wealth.

212. Those who love and worship this *Vibhuti*, which is Reality, will become this *Vibhuti* itself. Therefore, having destroyed the ego, ever remain as this *Vibhuti*, which is Self.

213. When the insentient ego turns inwards through Self-attention and dies, the Fire of *Jnana* burns in the Heart and consumes all the three worlds in its blazing red flame, which is the significance of the red *kumkum*.

Michael James: The three worlds are heaven, earth and the nether regions.

38 Shiva’s Divine Bull

214. The reason why the *Puranas* describe the bull taken by Shiva as His vehicle and similar creatures [taken by other Gods] is to gradually cultivate in us a habit of viewing all manifest forms as God, their Substratum.

39 *Shakti* and *Shanti* (Power and Peace)

215. Nothing is impossible for Power of Self, which is the power of the Almighty’s Grace. Some people say “It is possible only through the power of sword and shield”, because of the dirty nature of *Maya*, the notion “I am the filthy body”.

Sadhu Om: This verse explains the success achieved through the divine power of non-violence during India’s fight for freedom.

216. Those that say that Power and Peace are different do not know them rightly. What prevails internally as Peace is expressed externally as Power.

B6. What is experienced as Peace while [the mind is]

inward turned, is experienced as Power while [it is] outward turned. Only *Jnanis* who have deeply enquired and realised [the true nature of Self prevailing during both introversion and extroversion] know that Peace and Power are one and the same.

Sadhu Om: There is a saying, "Which is more difficult, to build a dam and control the flood, or to breach the dam and release the flood?" To arrest the mind, which by habit wanders outside with great force, and to keep it peacefully within the Heart, the Supreme Power of Grace is needed; but to release the mind, and so allow it to create [i.e., to conceive] and see innumerable worlds externally, only a slight allowance of that Supreme Power is needed. Therefore, the powers of creation and sustenance are but a tiny reflection of that Supreme Power of Peace within. If an aspirant can understand this, he will surely no longer feel any delight or wonder in acquiring the eightfold *siddhis* and the power to create and sustain whole universes.

217. The power to punish others in many ways can be found in one who has cultivated a noble character and virtuous behaviour; but having the greatest forbearance is the only true sign of having really achieved Godhood.

Sadhu Om: Rather than possessing outward powers to punish others, the true and greatest power is to be inwardly at Peace, and thus to be able to bear with and forgive others. Thus this verse confirms the ideas of the previous verse.

40 *Mahat* and *Anu* (The Greatest and the Smallest)

218. When the opposite poles of a large magnet and a small one are joined, the small one, by gaining the greater power of the large one, becomes one with it and shares the same properties.

Sadhu Om: In this verse a simile is used, without it being explained. The large magnet is a simile for *Mahat* [i.e., God or Self], the small one is a simile for *Anu* [i.e., *jiva* or ego], and their opposite poles are God's feet and the *jiva's* head. Joining their opposite poles, therefore, means that the *jiva* bows down and

places his head beneath the Feet of God, and thus loses his individuality by merging in God, and becomes God Himself. That is, when the petty ego merges with Self through self-surrender it shines as the Supreme Self Itself.

41 Desire for *Siddhis*

219. To greedily beg for petty *siddhis* from God, who is ready to give Himself, the All [*Sarva*], is just like begging for stale gruel from a philanthropist who has the heart to give everything that is asked for.

220. One who longs for *siddhis* after arriving in the world of *Atma-Siddhas*, the unlimited Space of Self-Consciousness, is just like the one who wants sour and stale gruel after reaching Heaven, which provides divine elixir, the food of immortality.

Sadhu Om: The phrase '*Atma-Siddha-Loka*' [the world of *Atma-Siddhas*] may be interpreted in a number of ways; its principle meaning must be Self, as all *Atma-Siddhas* are Self and nothing but Self, and in their view there is certainly no *loka* or world other than Self.

It may also mean the physical presence of the Guru or *Atma-Jnani*, in which case this verse is a reference to those unfortunate souls who, despite being blessed with the company of Bhagavan Ramana, left Him due to their greed for *siddhis*. "After arriving in *Atma-Siddha-Loka*" may alternatively mean, "though the ego dwells under the mercy of the ever-attained *[Nitya-Siddha]* Self".

221. In the heart in which the flame of Supreme Devotion blazes forth, all *siddhis* unite together. But such a Devotee, whose mind has completely become a prey to the Lord, will never feel a liking for them.

222. If an aspirant treading on the path of Liberation develops a liking for *siddhis*, his ego will wax and hence his bondage will become denser.

B7. Absolute stillness of mind alone is the attainment of Liberation. This being so, tell me how can those who yoke their mind to *siddhis* which are unobtainable without mental efforts, drown in the Bliss of Libera-

tion which is the complete cessation of mental activities?

Michael James: Refer also to *The Call Divine*, vol. IV p. 401. This verse is in *Collected Works* as verse sixteen of *Ulladu Narpadu Anubandham*.

Sadhu Om: This verse reveals that without '*chitta-chalana*' [i.e., mental activities] no *siddhis* can be performed. However, the *siddhis* which are apparently performed by a *Jnani*, whose mind is dead, are different because they are caused by the Will of God, and the *Jnani* therefore feels no sense of doership [i.e., He does not feel that He Himself performs them]. Hence, we should know that a *Jnani* performs *siddhis* without any mental activities, and that one who, on the other hand feels "I am doing, I will do, or I can do *siddhis*" is certainly not a *Jnani*.

223. O man, the most wonderful *siddhi* is that you, who are really pure formless Self-Consciousness, take the body with its legs and hands as 'I' and go dancing about as if real; [compared to this] even the eight kinds of *siddhis* are no real wonders.

Michael James: " …go dancing about as if real…" refers to the ego thinking that it performs *karmas* and undergoes many births and deaths.

Sadhu Om: By referring to man as "pure", it is pointed out that he is not any of the impure attributes such as mind; by referring to him as "formless", it is pointed out that he is not any form such as the body; by referring to him as Self-Consciousness it is pointed out that he is not some inert matter such as the corpse-like body. But since We are able to apparently change ourselves into all these things [i.e. ego] which are directly opposed to our true nature, this is said by Sri Bhagavan to be the most wonderful of *siddhis*. This *siddhi* is made still more wonderful since We, the motionless Self, having become an ego then perform actions and undergo many births and deaths. Thus, Sri Bhagavan points out that, more wonderful than any of the eightfold *siddhis*, is this *siddhi* by which the ever-flawless Self appears to become the defective ego.

224. The attainment of Self, which is the Primal Thing, and

the Knowledge of Liberation, is alone the true *Jnana-Siddhi*. All the other eight types of *siddhis* belong merely to the wavering mind and its power of imagination.

42 Immortality

225. Immortality is reserved only for those who have died into their ego, the filthy empty sense "I am the body", which veils their immortal nature of *Sat-Chit-Ananda*, the only beloved Thing.

Sadhu Om: Some misguided aspirants take to various kinds of yogas to prevent the body's death or at least to lengthen its life, in the false belief that that is immortality. Taking pity on such people, Sri Bhagavan here clearly defines true Immortality.

226. Because of the delusion that the alien body is 'I', birth and death seem to befall us. Therefore, immortality, our true nature, is achieved only when this delusion is completely removed.

Sadhu Om: Birth and death only befall the body, but taking the body to be 'I' we feel "I am born, and I will die". If we wish to become immortal we therefore merely have to cast off this illusory identification with the body, and we will then realise that we are the Ever-Unborn and Ever-Immortal Self.

227. Death is nothing but the delusion that "I am the alien body", and Immortality is nothing but the Bliss that is gained when that delusion dies through the knowledge of the non-dual Self.

228. Can immortality be obtained unless the one who takes this body as 'I' dies as Self, having become afraid of this body's death and having, therefore, enquired "Who is this I?" [No.]

229. Know and accept that Immortality is only the shining of the true Clarity [i.e. pure Consciousness], without the delusion of mental modifications. Death cannot be overcome by anything other than that Pure Consciousness.

Sadhu Om: As death is the result of ignorance, it is said in this verse that it can be overcome only by Knowledge, the Pure Consciousness of Self.

43 *Kaya* and *Kalpa*

230. To name a transient and illusory thing which is born to die, as *Kaya* is simply a polite mockery. Only Self-Consciousness, which is found to be the Ultimate Truth, is permanent [*Kaya*].

Michael James: *Kaya* literally means permanent, but it has come to mean in common usage the body.

231. The real, unique Self-Knowledge, which is distilled and obtained when the repeatedly rising ego merges into its Source is the true *Kalpa* [medicine].

Michael James: Yogis generally use the word *Kalpa* to mean the elixir for lengthening the body's life, but Sri Bhagavan points out with this verse that the true *Kalpa* is Self-Knowledge.

44 The Attainment of Bodily Immortality

232. Only those who do not know that the body is the root-disease which gives birth to all other diseases will perform *tapas* to achieve bodily immortality, instead of trying to root out this disease; such people are like one who toils hard to water mere weeds.

233. Only those worthless people whose form is the poisonous and non-existent ego, which is the base of all terrible diseases, will untiringly perform *tapas* to immortalize the body, like one who takes a medicine to aggravate his disease.

234. As a result of prolonged, worthy, and well-performed *tapas*, desiring to stabilize one's individuality instead of ever-remaining in the Supreme Silence, is due to dense ignorance, like achieving poverty with great longing and struggling.

235. For those who see through perfect *Jnana*, this bodily life is unreal and merely mental, and therefore know

that there is only misery and no benefit in *jiva's* prolonging their *jiva's* lifetime.

45 *Vairagya* (Dispassion)

236. Know that people who offer you praise and *puja* with worldly ambitions, to make your heart swell with joy, are only a golden bait offered by *Maya* to entice you, who are doing *tapas* with great *vairagya*.

Sadhu Om: If the praise offered by others gives one even the slightest joy, then like bait, it will cause one's downfall. Such praise does not, of course, bind a *Jnana-Mukta*, who has lost his individuality, and so Sri Bhagavan clearly addresses this verse to "you who are doing *tapas*".

Many aspirants, even before reaching the goal of Egolessness, are enchanted and deluded by the praise and worship of others, and forgetting the goal, they run after name and fame, and going from place to place, they give teachings, blessings, etc. To save them from such self-ruin, Sri Bhagavan graciously gives these instructions. Just as the bait, though golden, will kill its prey, so also name and fame, though seemingly worth achieving, will ruin the aspirant by strengthening his ego, and will hinder him from reaching the Goal.

237. Supreme *Jnana* dawns with ease only for those fortunate ones in whose hearts dispassion towards the pleasures of this world and the next springs forth naturally in this birth.

238. Know well that the experience of Bliss exists only in Self and never in this life of delusion, and hence achieve Self-Knowledge, which is the Space of Grace and the final state of Supreme Silence.

Sadhu Om* and *Michael James: Since space is all-pervading, vast, abundant, and subtle, Sri Bhagavan uses the word 'Space' – as in 'Space of Grace', 'Space of Consciousness', 'Space of Bliss' etc., – to denote the idea of all-pervading vastness, abundance, and subtlety, which are all qualities of Self.

239. O my dear friend *Vairagya* who is always enlightening me with Knowledge by destroying the dense delu-

sion of desire, please do not abandon me who ever claim your friendship.

Sadhu Om: To stress the instruction that we should never give up *vairagya*, it is nicely expressed here in the form of a prayer addressed to *Vairagya*, which is personified as a friend, asking it never to forsake us.

240. O my virtuous friend *Vairagya*, when the proverb says, "Friendship, even with a wicked ghost, is difficult to break, once it is made", if I break my friendship with you who has been protecting me from evil and leading me home during all my past lives, it would be worse than meeting me with the hostility of the whole world.

Sadhu Om: Since it is difficult to break a friendship, even when it is found to be harmful, it is nearly impossible to break one which is known to be beneficial. However, if a beneficial friendship were broken, especially with such a friend as *Vairagya*, it would be the worst calamity that could befall one.

241. Whatever thought may rise, not to let it live or grow, but to destroy it then and there, without the least slackness, by merging it back into its Source, is powerful and intense *Vairagya*.

Sadhu Om: Formerly, we were taught by the Scriptures that *Vairagya* is to feel aversion for our desires and to reject them, but now Sri Bhagavan teaches us that true *Vairagya* is to maintain a vigilant Self-attention by which every thought, instead of being allowed to rise and develop, is turned back and merged into its Source.

242. If, by the wonderful weapon of Self-enquiry, you would continue destroying, one by one, all the innumerable foes – the *vasanas* rising in the form of thought – as and when each of them comes out of the fort – *chittam* – the enemy's fort will finally be in your hands.

Sadhu Om: All the *vasanas*, which have the collective name of

chittam, have their abode in the Heart [refer to *Ulladu Narpadu Anubandham* verse 19, *Arunachala Ashtakam*, verse 7, and verse 249 of this work], so the enemy's fort which we will capture is nothing but our own home, the Heart. The destruction of the enemy is nothing but *Mano-Nasha*, the destruction of our own mind.

The above two verses are both to be found in prose form in *Who am I?*

46 *Jnana* and *Vairagya*

243. If the world that is seen is found to be not apart from the seer, that is *Jnana*. *Vairagya* is clinging fast to Self and rejecting this world with detachment viewing it as merely void.

Sadhu Om: Though the world is seen both by the *Jnani* and the *ajnani*, the *Jnani* does not see it as being other than Himself. If, on the other hand, one sees the world as being apart from oneself, one is an *ajnani* and one is only at the stage of practice, in which case one should view the world as an illusory appearance to be rejected. This practice is *vairagya*, which is necessary to gain *Jnana*. Refer also to *Who am I?*

47 The Nature of *Chittam*

244. Just as a clear prism appears to be red when it is near a red flower, so *Chit* appears to be the *chittam* when it is near [but not truly associated with] the dirty worldly tendencies. The *chittam* will remain and shine as the Supreme *Chit* alone, if the syllable '*-tam*', which represents the impurity, *Maya*, is removed.

Sadhu Om: The prism remains ever colourless and its red colour is only apparent. To remove the red colour, it is sufficient if the flower is removed, because the prism will then be seen to be colourless as before. Similarly, *Chit* truly remains ever pure and the impurity of *Maya* is only apparent. This apparent association of the ever-pure *Chit* with *Maya* is known as '*chittam*' and to remove '*-tam*' [i.e., *Maya*], which is merely attention wrongly focused on 2nd and 3rd persons, it is sufficient if attention is focused on the 1st

person, because the '*chittam*' will then be known to be the ever-shining *Chit*, Shiva.

48 *Chitta Suddhi* (Purity of Mind)

245. The beauty of external objects induces pleasure but does great harm; inner purity, however, is not like this, so it alone is the true beauty. [This is why] wise men adore the One who is pure in heart and say with wonder, "This is God in human form".

246. Great disaster will result if, instead of seeking inward beauty, ones seeks only outward beauty. Such [foolishness] is just like the moth which loves the beauty of the flame, or the cobra which loves the female *viriyan* snake.

Sadhu Om: The *viriyan* is a very venomous snake, so if a male cobra loves a female *viriyan*, he will be courting his own destruction.

49 Death

247. To stray from the immortal Self, which is the Primal Thing, the Source of all, the Home of Love, the form of Bliss, and the Space of Supreme *Jnana*, is Death.

Michael James: 'To stray from the immortal Self' means to rise as an ego.

248. By approaching the Guru and serving Him faithfully, one should learn through His Grace the cause for one's birth and for one's suffering. Knowing then that these are due to one's straying form Self, it is best to abide firmly as Self [since this is the means to avoid such Death].

50 The *Jiva's* Dwelling Place

249. The *jiva* dwells in the Heart, which is beyond mental conception, and his *vasanas* also dwell there. If, instead, the *vasanas* dwelt above, in the brain, would they not be destroyed when the brain [i.e. head] is cut off?

Sadhu Om: Kavyakantha Ganapati Sastri was once arguing with

Sri Bhagavan, saying that *vasanas* dwell in the *sahasrara* [i.e. the brain], but Sri Bhagavan replied that if that were so, the *vasanas* would be destroyed and *moksha* would be attained when a person was beheaded. Moreover, the *vasanas* must dwell with their possessor, the *jiva*, whose home, the Heart, must be within the trunk of his body and not within the head, since when a soldier's head is cut off in battle, his body may continue showing signs of life for some time. Sri Bhagavan, thus concluded that the Life-Centre, which is the dwelling place of the *jiva* and his *vasanas*, is the Heart and not the brain.

250. Since the flame of *Kundalini* rises upwards [from the base of the spine – the *mooladhara*] and the Nectar flows downwards from the brain [the *sahasrara*], the target is the Heart, the Life-Centre.

Michael James: In the waking state, when world and body-consciousness are felt, the I-consciousness is spread throughout the body, but when Self-attention is practised the I-consciousness begins to withdraw itself. This withdrawal takes place through the channel known as *Sushumna Nadi*, which stretches from the base of the spine [the *mooladhara chakra*] to the brain [the *sahasrara chakra*]. This rise of the I-consciousness through the *Sushumna Nadi* is known as the rise of *Kundalini* which is described as a serpent only for the dull beginners in yoga [see *Vichara Sangraham*, *The Compilation on Self-enquiry*, Chapter 7]. The I-consciousness having been withdrawn and gathered in the *Sahasrara*, will then flow down towards its Source the Heart, and the thought-free vacuum thus left in the *Sahasrara* is felt as bliss. This bliss is known by Yogis as the Nectar and it is felt to be flowing downwards as the I-consciousness descends towards the Heart.

251. Whoever contemplates upon whatever centre, as if Self were dwelling there, it will appear to that person, due to the mind's power of concentration, that Self is experienced in that centre. Yet, the true centre of Self is only the Heart wherefrom the 'I-thought' rises and where it sets as a place of refuge.

Michael James: The phrase 'whatever centre' may include any of

the six imaginary yogic centres or any other point in the body which may be chosen for the practice of concentration.

252. Leaving aside Self, the Heart, with which one is connected in all [the three] states, if one concentrates upon any other centre [as if one were dwelling there], one will only be absorbed in a delusive *laya* and one cannot thereby know Self and be saved.

51 The Heart

253. The Heart is said to be of two different kinds, one to be ignored and the other to be considered. The first kind, which is perceptible through the senses, being on the left side of the chest, is inert.

Sadhu Om: Since the pulsation which is the sign of life is caused by the fleshly organ on the left side of the chest, people generally conclude that it is the Heart which is the Life-Centre or Seat of Self in the body. Sri Bhagavan here denies this opinion and teaches the place of the true Heart.

254. The Heart which pervades both inside and outside the body, shines on the right side of the chest, according to the experience of *Jnanis*. Know that it is only for fools that mistake the body for Self that the heart is in the form of a fleshly organ on the left side of the chest.

Sadhu Om: See also: "The wise man's Heart is at his right, but a fool's heart is at his left" [Ecclesiastes X-2].

It is well known to those who understood Sri Bhagavan correctly that, although He said that the Heart is on the right side of the chest, He never advised anyone to meditate on that point in the body. It is unfortunate therefore that some devotees of Sri Bhagavan, having not reflected over verse 22 of *Ulladu Narpadu Anubandham* – "That [Heart] is both inside and outside, yet it exists beyond [the limitations of] both inside and outside" – used to meditate upon the right side of the chest and also recommended others to do so. Because the teaching in verse 261 and 262 of this work have not been recorded in any of Sri Bhagavan's other works, and because these two verses have not been adequately translated and made available in any language other than Tamil, such a

wrong interpretation persists even now and people still continue with this wrong practice. Verse 3 of *The Five Verses on the Oneness of Self*, which also appears in this work as verse B8, should be referred to and understood here.

255. If Self, the Lord of the soul, did not indisputably reside on the right side of the chest, why do one and all have the habit of touching only that place [to denote their self], whenever they say 'I'?

256. The indescribable Heart is the mirror in which all [i.e., the entire universe] appears. The One Single Consciousness, the Space of mere Being, alone is the Primal and Supreme Thing, the Silent Whole.

Michael James: "That One Single Consciousness, the Space of mere Being" means the unalloyed and simple Consciousness "I am", and not "I know myself", and, hence, it is called "mere Being". Refer to verse 26 of *Upadesa Undiyar*, "Knowing Self is being Self".

257. Heart, the Source, is the beginning, the middle, and the end of all. Heart, the Supreme Space, is never a form, It is the Light of Truth.

258. The death of the mind drowned in the Ocean of Self-Consciousness is the eternal Silence. The real 'I' is the Supreme Heart-Space which is the great Ocean of Bliss.

Sadhu Om: This verse says that the mind drowns in the Ocean of Self-Consciousness [*Chit*], which is the real 'I' [*Sat*] and the Ocean of Bliss [*Ananda*]. Hence, the subtle manner in which this verse is phrased gives the implication that WE are the Ocean of *Sat-Chit-Ananda*.

259. You [the mind] cannot cognize Self, which is the perfect unbroken Existence and the One without a second. The Heart, *Sat-Chit-Ananda*, which is the same thought-free Self, is Annamalai.

Sadhu Om: Since even the gods Brahma and Vishnu were unable to know the top or bottom of Arunachala [the blazing column of

Self-Consciousness], It is named, in Tamil, *Annamalai*, which means “Unattainable Hill”. Thus, when even the gods cannot cognize Self, the mind cannot do so either; that is to say neither the gods nor the mind can know their Source unless first they merge into it and lose their individuality [i.e., unless, by remaining as Self, they cease to be gods or mind].

260. He who knows that Heart will never be ruined; having lost the sense of bondage, He becomes the Supreme. He is free from the thoughts of duality and He alone enjoys, without delusion, the real Bliss.

261. Though the Heart is said to be both inside and outside, it truly exists neither inside nor outside, because the appearance of the body, which is the base of the difference ‘inside’ and ‘outside’, is itself a mental conception.

262. While the body is [in fact] in Self, one who thinks that Self [or Heart] is within the insentient body is like one who thinks that the screen – which is the substratum of that cinema picture – is contained within the picture.

Michael James: The translation of B8, which appears here in the original Tamil text, is the same as the translation of verse 262 above, but in its Tamil original Bhagavan has improved upon the style of the previous verse. This verse also appears as verse 3 of *Ekatma Panchakam (The Five Verses on the Oneness of Self).*

The screen is the substratum on which all pictures appear and disappear and in a similar way Self is the substratum in which the picture of this whole universe including the body is contained. It is, therefore, incorrect to say that Self is within the body. Sri Bhagavan uses this simile to drive home the point that, just as the screen is real and the pictures are unreal, Self is the Reality and the pictures of the mind, body and universe are unreal. How, therefore, can the Real be contained in the unreal?

Suppose a pot made of ice were immersed deep in the sea, would it not be wrong to say that the water is contained only within the pot? In fact, the water is both inside and outside, and even the pot itself is only water. Similarly, the Realised One knows that Self alone exists, and that there can be no question of It existing inside

or outside the body, since the body and the whole universe are nothing apart from Self. This undiluted truth exists even in the state of ignorance, though the ignorant are unaware of it. ‘Inside’ and ‘outside’ are only in reference to the body, so when the body is found to be unreal, how can the limitations of ‘inside’ or ‘outside’ be applicable? Therefore, Self, the Reality, should not be conceived as being in any way contained within the body.

263. Therefore, only the *Jnani* – who has seen the death of the ego which is in the form of the notion ‘I am the body’ – will, with His sharp, subtle, and divine outlook, which is completely freed from delusion, see the Heart everywhere and attain greatness.

264. The Heart, where the Supreme Silence of God’s Grace is shining, is the only state of *Kaivalyam*, in the Presence of which the rare pleasure of all the heavens are revealed to be nothing.

Michael James: *Kaivalyam* is the state of Supreme Oneness.

Sadhu Om: Sri Bhagavan used to compare all the pleasures available in the celestial worlds, including even *Brahma Loka*, to the tiny specks of moonlight which fall on the ground through the dense foliage of a large tree, whereas the *Jnani’s* experience of Bliss is like the full moon-shine in an open space.

265. The Heart, which shines pure after the eradication of wavering [tendencies] and veiling [delusion], and which remains as the One Truth, is the Supreme *Atma-Loka* for which even the gods of heaven are longing.

Michael James: *Atma-Loka* simply means Self, and it is here called a ‘*loka*’ (i.e., world) in order to compare the Bliss of Self with the pleasures of celestial *lokas*. Since even the gods in the celestial *lokas* (such as *Swarga Loka* and *Brahma Loka*), though they are enjoying the greatest pleasures, are still longing for the Bliss of Self, these celestial *lokas* are worthless.

52 The Guru

266. The Self-Consciousness which shines after the destruction of the [root] thought – the identification

with any one of the [three] bodies as 'I' – is, the Almighty Power [*Akila Para Shakti*] who resides as 'I' in the hearts of all created beings.

Michael James: It is generally supposed that Omnipotence (*Akila Para Shakti*) is the power of God who creates and sustains the whole universe and the individuals therein. However, this power of creation and sustenance is merely able to limit 'I' to a particular body, but since the true Self-Consciousness experienced by a *Jnani* destroys this limitation, It is a greater Power. Therefore, Sri Bhagavan points out that the Self-Consciousness of a *Jnani* is the true *Akila Para Shakti*.

267. This natural Self-Consciousness of mere Existence, without any sense of duality, is the Supreme Silence, which is glorified [by the scriptures] as the perfection of *Jnana*, and which cannot be known by the ego, the foolish demon-nature.

Sadhu Om: The Self-Consciousness referred to here denotes *Sat-Chit*, and it is described as natural because it is ever-attained, and not something to be newly achieved.

The eight-fold *siddhis* depend upon the functioning of the ego, which is here said to be a demon nature. These *siddhis* are, therefore, demonic powers and not divine powers as people generally believe.

In the above two verses no direct mention is made of the guru, but they are given in the beginning of this chapter in order to guide aspirants who are intent upon finding the true Guru. These verses teach that the Omnipotence [*Akila Para Shakti*] of the Guru lies in His Power to destroy the ego, and that Power is simply His mere Self-Consciousness, and not the ability to perform and display miraculous *siddhis*.

268. Know and discover that He alone who possesses such Akila *Para Shakti* [i.e., the Power of Supreme Silence which consumes all by remaining as mere Existence-Self-Consciousness], is the Real Guru who can by His unlimited Grace merge any soul who comes to Him into the non-dual Self, the *Jnana* beyond all speech.

Sadhu Om: The words “any soul” are used to stress the point that even non-human creatures will be given liberation by such a Powerful Guru, as, for example, birds and beasts attained Liberation through the Grace of Bhagavan Ramana. Considering this, even immature human beings must be assured of uplift if they come to such a Real Guru.

269. Truly, perfect discipleship – which is the steadfast Supreme Devotion that flares up with the merging of the ego into the Light of Supreme Stillness [i.e. Self-Consciousness] – is alone the right Guruship. Thus you should know.

270. He who turns you towards Self and reveals to you the knowledge of Self, is the Guru. In truth He is Self and He is God. Cling to Him.

Michael James: As the whole universe which we see is but a projection of Self, Self alone is God, the real creator of the universe. It is also Self alone that, after maturing the devotee through so many births, takes the form of the human Guru in order to reveal *Jnana* to him. Thus God, Guru and Self are one and the same.

271. He who gives ‘do’s’ and ‘don’ts’ to those who come to him is both Yama [Death] and Brahma [the Creator] to them. But the truly divine Guru is the one who proves to them that nothing is to be newly accomplished by them.

Sadhu Om: The ‘would-be guru’, by ordering those who come to him to perform many actions [*Karmas*] such as *Japa* or *Dhyana*, is only loading a greater burden of new actions upon the aspirants, who come to him for relief, because they are unable to bear the fruits of the actions they have already accumulated in the past. Instead of relieving them, the would-be guru plays the part of Yama [Death] by crushing and killing them with a greater burden of *Karmas*.

Since individuals have to reap the fruits of their actions through innumerable births, the ‘would-be guru’ plays the part of Brahma [creator], by making them perform more *karmas* and thus making them take more births in order to reap the fruits of these actions.

However, as the *Sadguru* knows the truth that Self alone exists without a second, He convinces those who approach Him that they are none other than Self. When, through the power of His Silence, they come to understand this truth, they feel that they have nothing to do, but that they merely have to Be. As doing alone is action [*karma*] but Being is not, and as it is only *karma* that brings birth and death, they are relieved form both Brahma and Yama.

Unlike other Gurus who instruct their disciples to do the four yogas [*Karma*, *Raja*, *Bhakti*, or *Jnana*], Sri Bhagavan Ramana makes us stop doing anything in order to discover, "Who does these yogas?", and thus He turns our attention towards 'I', which is the right clue to keep us quiet. This is the nature of the Real Guru.

272. Since one does not love to listen to the teaching of the Supreme Self, which is ever going on in the Heart, one comes out with great enthusiastic delusion. Because of this, one needs a Guru outside.

273. That Self-Consciousness [*Sat-Chit*] which shines in all, as All, is the Guru.

Sadhu Om: *Guru* is That which exists and shines as 'I' in all, and is the one common factor in all.

274. Those who do not understand that the *Jnana-Guru* is the Formless Supreme Space, though He appears in the human form, are the chief amongst all the vilest sinners and criminals.

53 The Guru's Grace

275. For those who are suffering here in *samsara*, which has been created by the good and bad *karmas* that are the result of dark delusion, the only medicine to cure their mental anguish is the great enthusiasm which they feel for the Guru's Grace.

276. The Guru is the One, who removes the sufferings and bestows the Bliss of Liberation upon those who, when they come to Him, are swept away by the force of various *karmas* done with the attachment of likes and dislikes.

277. The gracious look of the Guru, the philosophers' stone, will transmute even the *jiva's* impure nature, the rusty iron, into pure *Jnana*, the gold. Therefore, the worthiest thing to choose, seek and steadfastly cling to is the *Darshan* of the Guru's gracious look.

278. To *jivas,* who are deluded into taking the false to be true, the Guru, who is Self, the Light to all the gross lights of the universe, exposes the falseness of their truth.

Sadhu Om: 'The false' in this verse denotes the whole universe, including the ego which sees it. 'Their truth' means that which appears to be true in their deluded outlook.

The gross lights of the universe [the sun, moon, fire etc.] are seen by the eyes, the eyes are known by the mind, and the mind borrows light from Self; therefore, the Guru who is Self is said to be the Light to all the gross lights of the universe. Refer also to *Ulladu Narpadu Anubandham [The Supplement to the Forty Verses]* verse 7.

279. The Supreme *Jnana-guru*, the motionless and subtlest Space of Grace, destroys "*Laghu*" – the worthless and wavering *jiva's* gross notion, 'I am the body' – and bestows upon him the true and perfect *Jnana*.

Sadhu Om: The nouns and adjectives which are used in the Tamil original in this verse, clearly show that the Supreme *Jnana-Guru* is the extreme opposite of the worthless and wavering *jiva*; the word "*Guru*" has the meaning of greatness and heaviness, whereas the word "*laghu*", which is used twice, has the meaning of worthlessness and lightness.

280. Guru, the Lord of *Jnana*, who is the power of the unlimited greatness of Self, is the Supreme Silence which completely defeats the worthless arguments of those who are stained with the delusion of worldly desires.

Sadhu Om: If one is defeated by the skill of one's opponents sharp intellect, the defeat is only temporary, since one continues to feel anger and enmity towards him. However, when the arguments of worldly people are defeated by the *Jnana-guru's* Supreme Silence

their minds are overwhelmed with Knowledge and Bliss, and so, forgetting their enmity, they feel great love for the Guru; thus, the victory won by Silence is eternal.

281. Without killing the body, but by killing, with the glance of His eyes, the ego which poses as if it were really existing, the Guru in no time exposes the entire fiction [from the body to the whole universe] as non-existent, and reveals the shining of the one Supreme Self as the only real existence.

Sadhu Om: Just as the bright sunlight exposes the non-existence of the snake, which appeared on a rope in the dim twilight, so the Light of the Guru's clear Self-Knowledge exposes the non-existence of the entire universe, which appeared in the dim light of the *jiva's* mind.

When a river merges into the ocean, all its attributes, such as its speed, current and shape, are destroyed, yet not one drop of its substance, the water, is lost. Similarly, when a *jiva*, "I am so-and-so", meets the glance of the Guru's eyes, all his attributes, such as "so-and-so", are destroyed, yet his substance, the Self-Consciousness *[Sat-Chit]* "I am", shines unaffected and alone; therefore it is said that the Guru "kills without killing".

282. It is impossible to see the Divine Dance of Self-Knowledge [the *Sphurana*, "I-I"] in the Heart, until the dance of the rebellious mind is destroyed by the Divine Power of the Sword of *Mei-Jnana* [Right-Knowledge], wielded by the great hero, the *Sadguru*, who has already beheaded the ghost, [His own] mind.

Sadhu Om: Shiva is said to be dancing in the '*smasana*' [burial ground] but it is impossible to see His Divine Dance until the dance of the many restless ghosts, who are also dancing there, is stopped. Similarly, we are told in this verse that it is impossible to see the Divine Dance of the *Sphurana*, "I-I" [which is the true significance of the Dance of Nataraja in Chidabaram], until the rebellious mind-ghost, which dances as 'I', is beheaded by the Grace of the *Sadguru*, who has destroyed His own mind.

283. Just as the sight of a lion appearing in its dream will

awaken an elephant from sleep, so also the *Darshan* of the *Sadguru* will awaken the disciple from the dream of this present waking state, which is merely an illusion, into the state of *Jnana*.

Sadhu Om: The present waking state is itself an illusory dream; just as a dream can only exist by depending upon the background of sleep [i.e., the loss of waking body-consciousness], so this present dream, our so-called waking state, can only exist by depending upon the background of the sleep of our Self-forgetfulness [i.e., the apparent loss of our natural pure Self-Consciousness].

This ignorance [i.e., our Self-forgetfulness] is a much prolonged sleep, in which innumerable dreams [i.e., our many lives] take place; refer to *Ekatma Panchakam [The Five Verses on the Oneness of Self]* verse 1, in which Sri Bhagavan expresses this idea.

What is destroyed by the *Sadguru* is not only the drama of our present waking state, but also the much-prolonged sleep of Self-forgetfulness, which is the background of all these dreams, our many births and deaths.

Just as the lion seen by the elephant in its dream is false, yet its awakening is true, so the name and form of the *Sadguru* is false [from an absolute viewpoint], yet the Awakening [i.e., the Dawn of Self-Knowledge] caused by Him is very Real. After the elephant wakes up from his dream, he will know that the lion seen by him was not real, and similarly, after the Dawn of Self-Knowledge, it will be known that even the name and form of the *Sadguru* is not real [i.e., the notion that the *Sadguru* is other than Self, 'I', will be known to be false].

284. Just as a deer caught in the jaws of a tiger [cannot escape], so those who are caught by the glance of the *Sadguru's* Grace will never be abandoned, but, having their ego and *vasanas* completely destroyed, they will realize the non-dual Truth.

Michael James: This well-known simile, which was first used by Sri Bhagavan in *Who am I?*, is worth pondering over carefully. A deer caught in the jaws of a tiger would generally be considered to be an object of pity, since it will surely be killed, yet Sri Bhagavan uses this as a simile to console devotees and to assure them that

they can never escape from the *Sadguru*, and will surely be saved by Him. The significance of this simile is made slightly clearer in this verse then in *Who am I?*, as it is said here that the *Sadguru* will completely destroy the ego and *vasanas* of His devotees, thus implying that He is the mighty Tiger who will consume the ego, the root of all misery. So, by means of this peculiar simile, Sri Bhagavan is once more stressing that the only true Salvation is the complete annihilation of the ego or individuality; hence, 'to be destroyed' is 'to be saved'!

285. The disciple's mind which has soaked in the Light of *Jnana* – the Feet of the *Sadguru* – which is abundant like [the light of] the sun, can never be imprinted by the three-fold differences, which appear to exist, as if real, in Self, the Pure Consciousness.

Sadhu Om: The "three-fold differences" include the triads [e.g. the seer, seen, and seeing], the three states [waking, dream, and deep sleep], the three *gunas* [*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*], etc.

Once a photographic film has been exposed to the sunlight, it loses forever its ability to receive the impression of any image. Similarly, once the mind of a disciple has been exposed to the Light of the *Jnana-Guru's* Grace, it can never be deluded by worldly desires, etc. Refer also to *Sri Arunachala Ashtakam*, verse 5.

Michael James: There are two possible versions of the next verse:

286a. Of what use are spoken words when the eyes of the *Sadguru* – who bestows *Jnana* through His Silence, and who reveals the Light of Self which finally survives – and the eyes of the disciple meet?

286b. Of what use are spoken words when the eyes of the *Sadguru* – who bestows *Jnana* through His Silence - and the eyes of the disciple meet, since that [meeting of their eyes] will itself reveal the Light of Self which finally survives?

Michael James: The last two lines of this verse are taken from verse 1100 of *Tirukkural*. The phrase 'who bestows *jnana* through his silence' may also be translated as 'who silently bestows *jnana*,' or 'who bestows silence, *jnana'*.

287. Perfect *Jnanis* have always and will always say, "By the mere Grace of the *Sadguru*, the True Thing – the final *Brahma-Jnana*, which shines in the pure Silence, the rarely attainable *Vedanta* – will dawn of its own accord in the heart as 'I-I'."

54 Some Assurances

288. Thinking in the proper manner of the Guru's Grace, which is beyond expression, and Being Still, remaining unattached to the false [world] appearance in front of us, is alone Blissful.

Sadhu Om: Sri Bhagavan often used to say "Grace is Self, which shines in everyone as 'I-I'." Therefore, "thinking in the proper manner of the Guru's Grace" is nothing but attending uninterruptedly to Self. In order to show that this Self-attention is nothing but avoiding second and third person attention, it is described here as "remaining unattached to the false world-appearance in front of us". Remaining in Self-attention by "Being Still" is neither a state of laziness, nor is it remaining like a stone in *kashta-samadhi* or *laya*; it is the state of making an uninterrupted effort towards Self-attention. When this state is understood and experienced as our own Natural State, then Self-attention becomes effortless, and that is *Sahaja Samadhi*.

289. Destroy the stealthy ego, which is the thought "I am the body", either by enquiring "Who am I?", or by melting into nothing by always thinking with love of God's feet. That which will then remain is the Light of *Jnana*.

Sadhu Om: This verse clearly shows that the ego can be destroyed only by Self-enquiry or self-surrender. One should destroy the ego by whichever of these two means appeals to one as better and more suitable. Anyhow, the destruction of the ego is alone recommended as being essential.

290. *Shanti* [i.e., Peace or Bliss], which is loved by everyone, cannot at all be attained by anyone, at any place, at any time, or by any means, unless the mind is sub-

dued by the Grace of the *Sadguru*. Therefore, turn towards His Grace with one-pointed devotion.

291. If one wants to be saved, one is given the following true and essential advice: just as the tortoise draws all its five limbs within its shell, so one should draw the five senses within and turn one's mind Selfward. This alone is happiness.

Michael James: The last sentence may also mean, 'This alone is the happy conclusion.'

Sadhu Om: This important advice, to withdraw the mind from the five senses and to turn it Selfward, is not given to one and all; it is given only for the benefit of those who wish to save themselves, and not for those who are still vainly hoping to save the world. Such people, who want to save the world, will find no taste for Self-attention, and thus they are not yet fit even to save themselves, let alone to save the world; unless one has first learnt to swim, it is vain and futile to jump into the water to save others.

292. Be assured that That which ever shines [for all] is certainly the true Existence of Self, "I am". When the True God is thus realised as one's own Self, without doubt or misconception, the Supreme Bliss will brim over.

293. Having known for certain that everything which is seen, without the least exception, is merely a dream, and that it [the seen] does not exist without the seer, turn only towards Self – *Sat-Chit-Ananda* – without attending to the world of names and forms, which is only a mental conception.

Sadhu Om: When it is said "… the seen does not exist without the seer… ", we should remember that the seer is also an unreal dream, like the seen.

The instruction: "… turn only towards Self – *Sat-Chit-Ananda* – without attending to the world of names and forms… ", should remind us that *Brahman* has five aspects, *Sat*, *Chit*, *Ananda*, name and form, of which *Sat*, *Chit* and *Ananda* are real, and name and form are unreal; if instead of attending to the unreal names and forms of the world, we attend to *Sat-Chit-Ananda* [i.e., Self], then

the world will be known as *Sat-Chit-Ananda*, and not as names and forms.

294. Attention to one's own Self, which is ever shining as 'I', the one undivided and pure Reality, is the only raft with which the *jiva*, who is deluded by thinking "I am the body", can cross the ocean of unending births.

295. The false delusion of the *jiva* can never be lost, unless Self – the pure *Sat-Chit*, which is the one Reality ever shining within, without a second – is realised.

296. Having annihilated the delusive mind which always dwells upon worldly things, having killed the restless ego, and having completely erased the worldly *vasanas*, shine as Shiva, the pure Consciousness Itself.

Michael James: The ego is called restless because it is always rising, setting or wandering.

297. Do not wander outside, eating the scorching sand of worldly pleasures, which are non-Self; come home to the Heart where Peace is shining as a vast, everlasting, cool shade, and enjoy the feast of the Bliss of Self.

298. O aspirant, having come to the Lord's feet for refuge, with great devotion and with a spirit of self-surrender, give up completely the desire for occult powers and *siddhis*, and aim only to attain and enjoy the Bliss of Liberation, which is Itself *Sada-Shivam* [the Supreme Lord].

Sadhu Om: This verse is a warning not only for those who desire to acquire *siddhis*, but also for those aspirants who desire to use the *siddhis* which they have acquired according to their *prarabdha*. Women, wealth and fame are the only things that can be gained by occult powers and *siddhis*, so, by advising us not to desire these powers, Sri Bhagavan is indirectly advising us to give up these threefold desires.

From this verse, we learn that Shiva and Liberation are one

and the same; in *Atma-Vidya* [*The Song of Self-Knowledge*], verse 5, Sri Bhagavan also uses the Name “Annamalai” to denote Self, so we should understand that in many places where words such as Hara, Shiva, Shiva’s Feet, the Guru’s Feet, etc., are used in this work, they denote Self and not a personal God. Refer also to verse 1101.

299. Having come under the sway of Grace, ever revel in the dense, blazing Mass of Supreme Knowledge, the Feet of Lord Hara, the indestructible Reality, without yielding to the mental activities of thinking and forgetting.

300. Man, the deluded ego-mind, cannot be freed from confusion and fear [of birth and death], unless he subdues himself by taking refuge under the protection of Grace; for, [by any other means], the force of past *karmas* [i.e., *vasanas*] is unconquerable.

55 The Guru’s *Uchishtam*

Michael James: When food is offered to the Guru, if the remaining portion is given to the disciple, it is considered to be very sacred, and a sign of the Guru’s Blessings and Grace; this remaining portion of food is known as ‘*uchishtam*’.

301. The *uchishtam* given by the Guru to the disciple is the enlightening words of instruction, coming from His own Self-Realization; the right manner of partaking of His *uchishtam* is for the disciple to silently abide in Self, as soon as he hears them.

302. After offering the ego – the attachment to the body as ‘I’ – as food to the Supreme Whole – the Silent Guru – the attainment, by the disciple, of Self, which remains shining in the heart is the eating of the Guru’s *uchishtam*.

Sadhu Om: The feeling ‘I am so-and-so’ is the ego, but when this is surrendered or offered to the Guru, only the portion ‘so-and-so’ [i.e., the attachment to the body] is removed. What then remains is only *Sat-Chit*, ‘I am’, which can never be either offered or taken.

This 'I am' is Self, which is described here as That "which remains shining in the Heart".

303. It is said [by Sages] that the mere life on earth of a great *jnani*, who ever revels in *Sat* [i.e., Self], is itself the supremely pure *uchishtam* of God, which will remove all the sins of the world.

Sadhu Om: The emphasis in this verse is that even the words, teachings and writings of a *Jnani* are not necessary, since His mere existence on earth is itself enough to remove all the sins of the world.

56 *Guru Puja* (Worshipping the Guru)

304. The habit by disciples of worshipping their Guru, who has taken them as His own, is, if pondered over, only observed as an outward formality, just like a wife's habit of outwardly observing proper reverence towards her husband while in company.

Michael James: In India it is the custom for a housewife to pay formal reverence to her husband by many actions such as always sitting at a lower level than him. In truth however, both of them know that these actions are mere formalities, and that, since they are one in life, she is not really menial or inferior to him. In the same way, even the Self-realised disciple will observe the formalities of outward reverence towards his Guru, even though both of them know that they are, in truth, one in *Jnana*.

305. For those who ever think of and cling to the Feet of the *Sadguru*, who is the blazing flame of pure *Jnana*, through the Grace obtained by such *Guru-bhakti*, their minds will become clear and they will achieve *Mei-Jnana* [i.e., the true Knowledge].

306. In those who are fortunate enough to surrender to the Feet of their *Sadguru*, *Para-Bhakti* [i.e., the Supreme Love] will grow. Such *Para-Bhakti* will itself grow into *Mei-Jnana*, which will completely burn away all other unworthy desires.

307. When Sri Krishna, the Ocean of Grace – having Arjuna between Himself and us - tells us "Know for

certain that I will release you from the bondage of the two kinds of *karmas* if you reach me", He is advising us to reach Self.

Michael James: "… having Arjuna between Himself and us…" means that Krishna is giving all of us instructions through Arjuna, just as an orator talks to a microphone, although he is truly addressing his speech to his audience.

The two kinds of *karmas* are *punya karmas* (meritorious actions) and *papa karmas* (demeritorious actions).

308. Worship of [i.e. surrender to] the Feet of the Guru, with *Guru-bhakti*, is the real *mantra*, which will destroy all the rising *vasanas* and bestow *Jnana*, in which there will be no fear of *Maya's* delusion. Thus should you know.

309. Though one performs all kinds of worship to the Guru, who is none other than the Supreme Shiva walking on earth, losing 'I', the ego, and merging into [i.e. uniting with] Him, the Lord of one's soul, is the best of [the modes of] worship.

Sadhu Om: All other ways of worshipping the Guru involve the use of body, speech or mind, and therefore, - unlike the merging of the ego into Self [i.e. *Jiva-Brahma-Aikya*] – they are such that they cannot be performed always and without a break. Hence, *Jiva-Brahma-Aikya* is the best way of worshipping the Guru. Refer also to *Upadesa Undiyar* verse 30: "Knowing THAT which survives the annihilation of 'I' is alone the true *Tapas*!… "

310. The great delusion caused by the ignorant ego creates the sense of separateness, which conceives the differences such as Guru-disciple, Shiva-*jiva*, etc. One's attainment of the State of Silence, where such a sense of separateness never rises, is the meaningful *Namaskaram* [i.e. obeisance], which one should make towards one's Guru.

311. Having destroyed the dualistic sense 'I am the disciple' by the great Fire of the Teachings of the *Jnana*-Guru, the Lord, the shining of the State of Supreme

Silence, devoid of all *vasanas*, is the true way of worshipping the *Sadguru*. Thus should you know.

312. By being well established in the Supreme Knowledge [*Guru-Bodham*] – which is a perfect experience, attained by means of the inward enquiry "Who is this 'I' which is adopted [through ignorance]?" – the fictitious sense 'I am the disciple' [*sishya-bodham*] is completely annihilated. This is the right worship of the *Sadguru* to be performed by a worthy disciple.

Michael James: "a perfect experience" means one which is complete, continuous and without doubts.

Sadhu Om: The sense 'I am a *jiva* is called *jiva-bodham*, and its destruction is generally known as *Shiva-Bodham*. Similarly, the destruction of the *sishya-bodham* [the sense 'I am a disciple'] is called, in this and other verses, *Guru-Bodham*. Thus *Guru-Bodham* simply means *Atma-Jnana*, the State of Self-Knowledge.

In this state, both the individual sense of the first person, 'I am so-and-so', and the sense of otherness [second and third persons such as the Guru] are not experienced. Hence the sense 'I am the disciple' has no real existence, and thus, in this verse, it is called fictitious.

313. Since That which has come in the Form of the *Sadguru* is nothing but the all-pervading – like the sun-light – vast Space of Supreme *Jnana*, the noble attitude of giving no room [in that vast Space] to the rising of the individual mind ['I'] is the worthy worship to be performed to the *Sadguru*. Thus should you know.

314. For a worthy disciple, the proper worship of the Guru is having the firm outlook of *Jnana-Guru-Bodham*, through which the disciple sees the whole universe – which is nothing but the forms of 'I' and 'this', each bound by desire towards the other – as the Form of his Guru. Thus should you know.

Michael James: 'I' and 'this' means the seer and the seen.

For the meaning of *Jnana-Guru-Bodham*, refer to the note for verse 312.

315. The dissolving of the ice – the ego, 'I am the body' – in the ocean of *Guru-Bodham*, which shines as the one blissful Self, is the right worship of the Guru. Thus should you know.

316. Naturally never giving room to the ego's sinful outlook – which divides the unbroken, single, all-pervading nature of the Guru into many – is the best worship of the Guru, who ever shines unobstructed.

Michael James: This verse clearly teaches us the true nature of the Guru; He is not the limited human form, He is the unbroken, single, all-pervading Consciousness.

The ego's outlook is said to be sinful because of the great sin which it commits by dividing and seeing the one real *Sat-Chit-Ananda* as many unreal names and forms of the universe.

317. After surrendering one's body [wealth and soul] to the *Sadguru*, the avoidance of the crime of *datta-pahara* – [that is] again mistaking the body, etc. as 'I' and 'mine' – is the pure worship of the *Sadguru*. Thus should you know.

Sadhu Om: *Dattapahara* is the crime of taking back what has already been given.

So long as a disciple feels 'I am the body' and 'this is my body', he cannot be considered to be one who has surrendered himself to the Guru. Instead, he should be considered to be one who has stolen the things which he has already given to another. In short, annihilation of the ego is the complete self-surrender, and that alone is the right *Guru-puja* [worship of the Guru].

318. The subsidence of the mind's mischief – of leaving the Feet of the *Sadguru*, who has taken one as His own by once subduing the three-fold fire, and of straying away into the fiery desert of sense-pleasures – and its merging [into Self], is the worthy worship to be performed to the Lotus-Feet of the Guru.

Michael James: 'The three-fold fire' is the three kinds of desire namely for women, wealth and fame.

When a ripe soul first meets his *Sadguru*, he at once feels, even without any effort on his part, a great peace in his heart and the removal of all worldly desires; this is due to the power of the Grace which prevails in the *Sadguru's* presence. This experience is the right sign by which one can know that the *Sadguru* has taken one as His own. This feeling of peace may either remain in one permanently or temporarily, according to the degree of one's maturity, but whichever is the case, there is no doubt that this is the sign that one has been brought under the protection of the Guru's Grace. In the hearts of the less mature souls, the desirelessness and peace, which have once been induced by the Guru's Grace, will seem to fade away after a while, and his mind will seem to desire worldly things (refer to *Maharshi's Gospel* Book I, chapter 3, p. 18), but the disciple need not get disheartened, thinking that he has been abandoned by the Guru. Just as a deer can never escape once it has been caught in the jaws of a tiger, so also, those who have been taken by the Guru as His own will never be abandoned, but will surely be saved. It is only as the result of Grace that all the hidden worldly *vasanas* in the disciple's heart are now churned and brought up to the surface of his mind, in order to be destroyed by the power of discrimination which is bestowed upon him by the Guru, because only then will he be able to understand that unbroken Peace is earned by one's own Self. In this way the Guru makes the peace as the disciple's own, because until it is thus found to be his own nature, the disciple cannot experience it permanently. Therefore, the less mature soul is warned that, though his three-fold desires are once subdued by the *Sadguru's* Grace, he should not stray away again into the fiery desert of sense-pleasures. This effort of his is described here as the worthy *Guru-puja*.

Refer also to *Who am I?*, where the same idea is expressed in the following words: "… those who are captured by the glance of the Guru's Grace will surely be saved and not abandoned. YET, ONE SHOULD FOLLOW WITHOUT FAIL THE PATH SHOWN BY THE GURU!"

319. One's merging into the Heart – through the enquiry into the nature of the ego, which is a delusion in the

form of mind – is the right worship of the Lotus-Feet of the supreme *Mouna-Guru*, who is beyond the mind.

Michael James: Since the Guru is nothing but the supreme *Mouna* (Silence) which is beyond the mind, any worship performed by the mind will not be fitting. By merging the mind into the Heart, Silence alone prevails, and that is the right medium through which He can be fittingly worshipped.

320. The right worship of the Lotus-Feet of the Guru, who shines as the vast Supreme Space, is the prevention of the rising and spreading of the dark cloud of the wrong outlook of the ego, who, though behaving as the body, pretends to be *Sat-Chit* [Existence-Consciousness – i.e. Self].

Michael James: The wrong outlook of the ego, which is described here as a dark cloud, is to see a multiplicity of names and forms, which are all unreal. This dark cloud thus obscures the nameless and formless Reality, which is the true nature of the Guru, and hence the right *Guru-puja* is the prevention of the ego's rising.

57 The Greatness of the Guru

321. Though one has shaken off all vices, secured all virtues, renounced all relatives, and observed all the austerities prescribed by the *Shastras*, can one reach Eternal Bliss unless one meets the *Jnana-Guru*? [No, one cannot!]

322. It is certainly impossible for one to attain and enjoy the Supreme Bliss of Liberation, the ultimate Gain, unless one receives the Grace of the *Sadguru*, who shines as the one Whole, which puts an end to the differences of [dyads and] triads.

323. The *Sadguru* – the one unlimited Whole, who pervades this and all other worlds, and all time and space, and who shines as 'I' within and as everything outside – is He who resides in the hearts of His intimate disciples as the Pillar of Light of Knowledge, the divine Lamp which needs no kindling.

324. By coming near to the *Sadguru* and by depending completely upon His Grace, with great Guru-*bhakti*, one will have no misery in this world and will live like Indra.

Michael James: Indra is the king of the *devas* and he has all the enjoyments of heaven at his feet.

325. Seated in the heart-throne of His beloved disciples, the Durbar of the *Sadguru* – who has destroyed all the evils of the disciple – has a mountain-like grandeur. Those who have experienced It [through the loss of their individuality] cannot express It, and those who talked about It have never experienced It; this is the verdict of the *Vedas*, given by the real Devotees [i.e. *Jnanis*].

326. The grand, natural and sweet Self-abidance [*Sahaja-Atma-Nishta*] of the *Sadguru*, who is devoid of the ego-sense, is the mighty Sword which can cut deep and remove the heart-knot [*hridaya-granthi*] of His loving disciples.

Sri Muruganar: This verse describes the power of the *Sadguru's* Self-abidance. Because outwardly He is sitting quietly, one should not come to the conclusion that He is not bestowing Grace upon one, since His natural Self-abidance is itself Grace. If one sits quietly before Him, this truth will reveal itself automatically.

327. Taking to Self-enquiry – as the result of a proper education and understanding – not straying away through the petty senses, and being firmly established in the Heart as the mere Self-Effulgence, is truly following the *Sadguru's Upadesa*.

58 Association with *Sadhus*

328. Wise people will never associate with those who are vainly argumentative, and who, instead of inwardly subduing themselves through knowledge of the righteous way, munch their empty mouths, due to their lack of any worthy aim.

Michael James: “Those who munch their empty mouths” is a Tamil idiom which means those who talk much, but about worthless matters.

329. Many are the evils that can befall one, if one associates with those mad people whose beautiful mouths alone chatter, but whose minds remain confused. The best association to have is only with those who dwell in the Supreme Silence, through having annihilated their minds.

330. O mind, immediately give up and cut your connection with those wicked people who go the wrong way, always arguing for the unjust; associate instead with *Jnanis*, who ever abide in the State of Peace, devoid of confusion.

331. Since all vices are born only out of the fictitious enthusiasm, which is caused by loss of Self-attention [*pramada*], the Blissful State of *Mei-Jnana* [True Knowledge], where the ego – which is that ignorant enthusiasm itself – is annihilated, is all the virtues.

332. Spotless *Jnanis* alone are truly virtuous; others [*ajnanis*] are base-natured. Therefore, to be saved, we should approach only those Virtuous Ones who ever abide in the Truth, by having got rid of the false worldly delusion.

59 The Greatness of the Devotees

333. Beyond speech is the greatness of those who have earned the privilege of becoming a prey to the glance of Grace of the *Sadguru*, who has ripened as the Fruit – the Supreme Self – on account of the invincible achievement of Self-Knowledge.

334. Hiding His own Form, taking another form as a human being, Lord Shiva enters the group of His enlightened devotees, who have staunch devotion to Him, as if He were one among them, taking immense pleasure in their holy company.

Sri Muruganar: Thus Sri Bhagavan indirectly tells us that the *Sadguru* is none but Shiva Himself.

335. The greatness of Devotees cannot be limited. Devotees are greater than Brahma and Vishnu, who often serve the Devotees as if they were their slaves. It is only the greatness of Devotees that the *Vedas* proclaim.

60 *Brahma Vidya*

336. Seers of the rarely seen Truth say, "*Brahma-Vidya*, which is worthwhile for the aspirant to learn, is to see [the truth of] the seer who sees the world, instead of seeing the world which is seen".

337. *Brahma Vidya* is nothing other than seeing That which remains when all these three – the mirage-like world, the seer of that world, and the bright eye's seeing – are burnt without a trace.

Michael James: "All these three", which are referred to in this verse, are the triad (i.e. *triputi*), the seen, the seer and the seeing.

61 The Truth In All Religions

338. "Who am I?" – the scrutiny of the indispensable truth of one's own Self – is the sole life-current passing through all the religions which have come to save us. Thus should you know.

Michael James: The truth of one's own Self is said to be indispensable because all other things depend upon it, and without it they could neither shine nor exist.

339. Just as the string which is strung through every bead is only one and not many, so the Supreme Lord exists and shines as the one Light in every religion, and so He also exists and shines, not as another, but as the one Self ['I am'] in all the innumerable creatures.

Sadhu Om: Refer also to *Sri Arunachala Ashtakam* verse 5.

340. Just as one flame appears to be many lights when it is lit in many lamps, so it is the one Self alone which appears to be many different individuals [*jivas*] when It is seen through many different attributes [*upadhis*].

341. If there were not, in each religion, at least one word which could reveal the transcendental Supreme Thing in the Heart, as clearly as a mountain on a plain, then all the researches and arguments found in the scriptures of that religion would become nothing but the hubbub of a cattle market.

Sadhu Om: It is asserted in this verse that at least one word or saying [*Mahavakya*] which easily reveals the fact that Self is the Supreme Reality will be found in every true religion existing on earth. Some of those pointed out by Sri Bhagavan are:

in Hinduism – "Tat twam asi", "Aham Brahmasmi", etc.
in Islam – "Ana'l-Haq"; [see verse 962]
in Judaism and Christianity – "I AM THAT I AM".

These words clearly show that God is the Reality of the first person, 'I'.

342. Various religions teaching various principles have come into existence in order to suit the various levels of maturity of the minds of the people. Therefore it is wisest to have an outlook of equality upon these religions, which should be encouraged [and not condemned].

62 The Vision of Limitlessness

343. For the one who has obtained the Eye of Self-Knowledge by diving deep within himself, there is no other thing to be seen or known. Why? Because, having lost the wrong knowledge that he is the body-form, he has rightly known himself to be the Formless.

Sadhu Om: According to the maxim, "As the eye, so is the sight" [refer to *Ulladu Narpadu* verse 4], so long as we know ourself as the name and form of a body, we will see the world and God as names and forms, and hence they will also appear to be separate from us. But when we realise that we are not the body-form, then the world and God, which previously appeared as mere names and forms, will disappear, and Self alone will shine as the Formless and Limitless One. For those who are in this State of Self-Knowledge, nothing will remain to be seen or known.

Refer also to verse 54 of this work.

344. Those who have sought for God within the moving temple, this body, and seen Him here clearly and without any confusion, will certainly see Him shining even in the vast temple, this wondrous universe.

Sadhu Om: The Tamil original also gives room for the last line of this verse to be interpreted as: "… will certainly see Him in the idols installed in all the temples which have been wonderfully constructed in this world."

345. For those who have known without delusion the truth of God – how He resides and shines within, as the Soul to the soul – even the presence of a worm, which is usually rejected by others, will shine as the beloved Presence of the Supreme Lord.

Michael James: "The Soul to the soul" means Self (*Atman*), which is the Source and Life of the individual soul (*jiva*).

346. For those who shine as Self, which is Grace – since their mind, which is the form of ignorance, has died – everything and every place will be found to be supremely Blissful in their divine view, which emerged as Self-Existence.

347. To those who see with their physical eyes, God appears to be a lustrous form; to the eyes of great yogis, He appears as their Heart-lotus; to the *brahmins* who perform *yajnas*, He appears as the fire of the *yajna*; but only to *Jnanis*, who have the Eye of Limitlessness, does He appear everywhere.

Sadhu Om: Those who see God as a lustrous form, a heart-lotus, or a fire, are only seeing a mental image, and thus for them God is only visible in those particular limited places. But since the *Jnani's* mind, which was limited by time and space, has been destroyed, He alone attains the True Seeing of God, and hence He sees God everywhere. Thus it is stressed in this verse that only a *Jnani* is able to truly see everything as God, and that others can only try to imagine the existence of God in everything.

348. Merely remaining as the Eye [i.e. Self], which is the One Space of Consciousness, by having annihilated the idea ‘I am the body-form’ and by having lost all the conceptions of the mischievous mind, is rightly and perfectly seeing God.

Michael James: Refer also to *Ulladu Narpadu* verse 8, as explained in *The Path of Sri Ramana* Part II, Appendix 4b, pp. 232-234.

349. When the tricky senses are controlled, when mental conceptions are removed, and when one is unshakably established as Self in the Heart, then the Knowledge which shines in that State of firm Self-Abidance is the Real God [Shiva].

350. Such a True Seeing, which is devoid of illusion and deception, is the State in which one shines as the Ocean of Bliss. Only in the Supreme Silence which is thus achieved in Self-Abidance, will the soul never again have a downfall.

63 The Loss of Individuality

351. When scrutinized, is there any existing thing such as ego, the troublemaker, except a mere name [‘I’]? Certainly not! If at all anything exists [for the name ‘I’], it is truly Self, just as the thing which exists for the false [name] snake is truly a rope.

Michael James: The falsity of ‘I’, the ego, is stressed in this verse. Refer also to *Upadesa Unidyar* verses 19, 20, and 21.

352. When the ego dies, its base, the supreme Self, shines in all Its fullness. No harm comes to You, Self, when the ego dies. Therefore don’t be afraid.

Michael James: The final sentence may also mean ‘Therefore, don’t be worried’.

353. Those who have sacrificed their mind as an offering to Shiva in the blazing fire of the supreme *Jnana-Tapas* [i.e. Self-enquiry], are Shiva Himself. Knowing

thus, we should also perform this Sacrifice and attain the State of formless Shiva.

Michael James: The second sentence may also be translated as ' Knowing them [*Jnanis]* to be Shiva Himself, we should worship them and thereby attain the State of formless Shiva.

354. Do not doubt, with fear, what will happen when you completely lose your individuality [*jiva-bodha*]. The true State of Self will then Itself be yours, just as one will permanently remain firm on the ground when one loses one's hold on the branch of a tree.

Sadhu Om: Immature devotees often used to ask Sri Bhagavan, "It is only this individual *jiva* that longs for all kinds of achievements, including *moksha*, so if this individuality is destroyed by *vichara*, how can *Moksha* be achieved, and by whom?" Hence, in this verse, Sri Bhagavan assures such people by saying, "Fear not, when the ego or individuality is annihilated, the State which remains will reveal Itself as the true State of Self, in which everything is accomplished".

There is an old Tamil saying which says that if one loses one's hold on a branch, one will be ruined, and hence it is rather strange and beautiful that Sri Bhagavan uses the same simile to assure us that loss of individuality is the highest attainment, and that it should not be feared. The significance of this simile can best be understood from the following story: A man was once seen standing under a tree, but clinging to a branch above his head, as if for dear life. When his friends asked him why he was clinging with so much fear to the branch, he replied that if he let go he would fall to the ground. Wondering at his foolishness, his friends pointed out to him that he was already standing on the ground, and that he therefore had nothing to fear; after much trouble they persuaded him to let go of the branch, whereupon he discovered the truth of their assurance. Those who fear to lose their individuality are just like this man; but clinging to their individuality they are gaining nothing, and if they once let go of it they will know for themselves that they are always the Ever-Blissful Self, and that there was never anything for them to fear.

355. Since in sleep, where the world loses its reality, everyone truly knows his existence and the non-exis-

tence of 'I am this' [i.e. his individuality], all must accept the Reality of the indestructible Self.

Michael James: Refer to *Upadesa Undiyar* verse 21.

356. The State in which the thought 'I' [i.e. the ego] does not rise even a bit is the State 'I am *Brahman'*. Does anyone become non-existent in sleep, where the thought 'I' does not rise?

Sadhu Om: It is made clear in this verse that, just as we experience no loss of our Self-Existence in sleep, where the individuality subsides, so even in *Jnana*, where the individuality is permanently destroyed, there is no loss for WE, the Self-Existence. Therefore there is no need for us to fear the loss of individuality.

The idea in the first sentence of this verse is also expressed in *Ulladu Narpadu* verse 27.

357. If we scrutinize properly, the state of 'I'-lessness is our Real State of Consciousness, in which the inertness of the fleshy body is fully removed. Does one not survive the loss of individuality [in sleep] without being affected? Know this truth by abiding in the State of Wakeful-Sleep [i.e. *Turiya* or *Jnana*].

358. To remain without 'I' is the State of *Jnana* – Self; truly, it is the blissful and peaceful State 'I am Shiva'. Know that the same is the *Kaivalya* [i.e. Non-dual] State of *Brahma-Nirvana*, which is glorified as the State of transcending birth and death.

Sadhu Om: Refer to *Ulladu Narpadu Anubandham* verse 13, in which Egolessness alone is said to be the State of all greatness.

64 The Pure 'I' (*Suddhahankara*)

359. When the ego, 'I am the body', is annihilated, the unlimited and unbroken 'I' [Self] shines forth. The shining forth of this 'I' is not fictitious like the ego, which takes birth in a filthy body on earth and suffers in bondage.

Sadhu Om: The feeling 'I am the body' is the ego. In this mixed

consciousness the attribute ‘the body’ alone is the impurity. When this impurity, the body-identification, is removed, That which remains as ‘I am’ is Self, which is also called the pure ‘I’ or *Suddhahankara*.

360. Know that the natural, unbroken and ever-existing Heart, ‘I’, which shines free of delusion, is the *Suddhahankara* [pure ‘I’] which is seen in *Jivan-muktas*, since it has no sense of doership in any activity.

361. Those who live a perfect life of *Mei-Jnana*, attained by the destruction of the impure ego – ‘I am this fleshy body’ – will be revelling in Self, unmindful of the body, with great Peace devoid of desire.

65 The Shining Forth of Self

362. Only when one’s own Source, the Heart, is known through enquiry, will the false first person, ‘I’, fall down; and only when that false first person falls abashed, will the true First Thing, Self, spring forth in all its Glory.

363. When the insubstantial ghost, the ego – which rises from the darkness of ignorance and whose dance is itself all this universe – is enquired into, it disappears like the bridegroom’s friend [in the story], and when it disappears, Self, the Sun, rises up tearing away the darkness of ignorance, *Maya*.

Sadhu Om: A stranger once entered a marriage-house and posed before the bride’s party as the bridegroom’s best friend; and with the bridegroom’s party he posed as if he were a member of the bride’s family. Thus for five days he passed his time happily, eating well and bossing the servants, but on the last day when enquiries began to be made about him, he disappeared. Similarly, the ego rises and poses both as *Chit* [Consciousness – the nature of Self] or as *jada* [inertness – the nature of the body], though it truly belongs neither to Self nor to the body. Thus it enjoys its special position until it is enquired into, whereupon it disappears.

364. The ending of the ego, by its drowning into the Space of Silence, is our [true life of] living as the Space of

***Jnana*. Therefore when the ego disappears, like a false dream, into its Source, the Real 'I' [Self] will shine forth spontaneously.**

365. This body is the cross. The ego – the identification 'I am the body' – is Jesus. The killing of the ego through Self-enquiry is the crucifixion of Jesus. The survival of Self from the death of the ego, and Its shining forth as the Supreme Thing is His Resurrection.

Michael James: Refer to verse 973.

366. The death of the ego in the unlimited Silence – the non-dual Truth – and the shining forth of Self is the *Kaivalya-Siddhi* [i.e. the attainment of Oneness]. In that State of *Jnana*, pure Bliss will gloriously blaze forth as one's own [true] Nature.

66 Getting Rid of Miseries

367. If the *jiva*, who is ever deluded and is always suffering from a feeling of deficiency, wants to get rid of all his miseries and to be happy, he need only know the Supreme One, his Lord, to be his own Self.

368. Not even the least of one's miseries will cease unless one knows That, by forgetting Which one becomes deluded by the mighty agent – worldly *Maya*.

369. Let him who weeps over the death of his wife and children, weep first for the death of [his] ego – 'I am the body' – and attend to his own Self, then all his miseries will die completely.

370. If you love others only for their bodies or their souls [i.e. their egos], you will suffer from grief when their bodies die and their souls depart. Therefore, in order to be free from such grief, have true Love towards Self, which is the real Life of the soul.

Michael James: A person's soul is nothing but his ego, the identification 'I am the body'. The true Life is Self, and not the soul or ego.

67 Desirelessness (*Nirasa*)

371. Desire makes even an atom appear as great as Mount Meru before it is achieved, and vice versa after it is achieved, and thus [desire] makes one always poor. Hence we have never seen any bottomless abyss that is as impossible to fill as desire, which can never be satisfied.

372. O good-hearted aspirants who want perfection, instead of trying to avoid poverty – which is a deficiency created by the mind – by acquiring wealth, it is better to acquire *shanti*, mental peace.

Muruganar: Poverty is truly created not by a deficiency of wealth, but by the deficiency of the wandering and desirous mind. Hence, poverty is not removed by acquiring wealth, it is removed only by subsiding the mind.

373. Will the mind which drowns in love for the Feet of the Lord start to dance in ecstasy, jumping as before into the delusion of married life and sexual pleasure?

374. Sages, the Knowers of the Truth, declare that the destruction of all mental activities [*chitta*-*vrittis*] is alone the greatest Happiness. Therefore desirelessness [i.e. the attitude of indifference], which is devoid of both likes and dislikes, is the best means.

375. Those who have desire are afflicted by the wretched anger when their desire is obstructed, and so it is certain that desire is inherent in anger. Therefore, when all the [six] vices are dying, desire dies last.

Michael James: The six vices are desire, anger, miserliness, confusion (i.e. the inability to discern the truth), pride and jealousy.

376. When it is said that having a desire even for the supreme State of Silence is failing to observe the great *Sat-Achara*, is it *Achara* to have desires for the worthless body and other worldly things?

Sadhu Om: *Achara* means observing high principles in life, and having any kind of desire is *anachara*. The greatest of all principles

is *Sat-Achara* [or *Brahmachara*], which is nothing other than abiding as *Sat* [i.e. Self].

For one who is observing *Sat-Achara*, which is the perfect state of Love, even the desire for Liberation should be considered to be wrong, because desire implies a movement of the mind towards a second or third person, whereas Love has the form of unbroken and unmoving Existence. This is the significance of the ancient saying, “Cut the desire even for God”.

Though the meaning of *Achara* should be understood in this way, we find in our midst people who boast that they are observing *acharas* and that they are therefore certainly above all others in life. They maintain untouchability, they hide themselves while eating, they take great care in wearing their clothes in a particular manner, etc., yet at the same time they are mistaking the filthy body to be themselves and they have innumerable ugly desires. Can their behaviour be considered to be *Achara*? Surely not. Therefore, unless one attains *Atma-Nishta* [i.e. perfect Self-Abidance], all one’s boasting about observing *acharas* is meaningless.

377. He who never thinks, “I want this; I do not have that”, will be ever contented with only those things which come to him according to his *prarabdha*. Will such a person leave his state of contentment and worry himself foolishly?

378. Except for the one who has completely cut the tie of desires, the false appearance [that he is a suffering *jiva*] will not cease. Therefore, without any hesitation, one should cut even the desire for the great Divine Happiness.

Michael James: Refer again to verse 376 and its note.

379. O foolish mind who is suffering due to the desire for the petty pleasures of this world and of the next, if you remain quiet [i.e. without desire] you will certainly attain that State of Bliss which surely transcends the pleasures of these two.

68 Bondage and Freedom

380. The annihilation of the delusion of the freedom of the individual is the attainment of the painless Freedom

of Self. This is the one supreme Knowledge which exists equally in all religions, which have so many branches.

Sadhu Om: Since *Dharma* [i.e. righteousness] is the root of all religions and since Egolessness alone is the essence of all *dharmas*, it is shown here that egolessness is the only Truth, existing equally in all religions.

381. The [repeated] births, which are caused by [the ignorance of] not knowing Self, will not cease by any other means [but knowing Self]. Only the real Self-Knowledge, which shines after the annihilation of the dense delusion – the ego, 'I am the body' – will cut bondage.

382. Great *Jnanis*, who never see anything as bondage except the rising of innumerable *chitta-*ˍ*vrittis*, do not see anything as Liberation either, except the death of all *chitta-*ˍ*vrittis*. This is the Truth!

383. The [impure] mind, which deludes itself as if it were limited, is the *jivatman* [i.e. individual soul], who suffers as if he were bound. If it remains still, without likes, dislikes or wonder, that [pure] mind is itself the *Paramatman* [i.e. Self].

Michael James: The Tamil phrase translated here as 'as if it were limited', may also mean "…as if it were a drunkard, …".

69 Self-enquiry

384. Giving up the attitude of outwardly enquiring more and more, "Who are you? Who is he?", it is best to always inwardly enquire with great interest about oneself, "Who am I?"

385. If one attends to the centre of oneself with a keen mind to know "Who am I?", the identification 'I am the body' will die and the Reality will shine forth as 'I-I'. Then all the illusory differences, which are like the blueness seen in the sky, will disappear.

386. All doubts and questions pertaining to duality and otherness will be destroyed by the question "Who

am I?" This question, "Who is this 'I' who doubts and asks about other things?", will itself turn out to be the *Brahmashtra*, and will destroy the appearance of all otherness, which is nothing other than dark ignorance.

Michael James: The *Brahmashtra* is the greatest and most powerful Divine Weapon.

387. By destroying the mischievous and frisky ego through the enquiry, "Who is this 'I' who sees the outside world through the deceitful senses?", to remain permanently in *Mei-Jnana-Para-Nishta* is truly the means for one to attain Liberation.

Michael James: *Mei-Jnana-Para-Nishta* means the supreme abidance as the true knowledge.

388. The individual who enquires into his real nature, "Who am I?", will die as the 'I'-less Self.

Sadhu Om: This is like saying, "The river will die as the ocean"; i.e. the ego will die through enquiry, and That which will survive its death is the 'I'-less Self.

389. Restraining the mind from going outside [through the senses], and fixing it always in its Source, Self, which is known as the Heart, so that the vain 'I'-thought will not rise again, is the *Atma-Vichara* [Self-enquiry].

Sadhu Om: Refer to *Who am I?* where it is said, "… Always keeping the mind fixed in Self – that alone is *Atma-Vichara* …"

390. To know the Supreme Thing, which shines in the heart as Existence-Consciousness, it is useless to search for It [as God] outside with great enthusiasm, instead of slowly and steadily attending to It [as It is] by remaining in solitude. [To search for It outside is] just like trying to dive within the water with a naked lamp in one's hand, in order to find a person who has drowned in a flood.

Michael James: A naked lamp will be extinguished on coming into contact with the water and will therefore not help one to find the missing person. Similarly, if one's attention is towards second and third persons, it will not help one to find the Supreme Thing, which is the Reality of the first person.

Refer also to *Sri Arunachala Ashtakam* verse 4, where searching for God outside while ignoring Arunachala, who shines as Existence-Consciousness (i.e. Self) is likened to taking a lamp to search for darkness.

391. Self, which shines within the five sheaths, should be attended to within the Heart. Instead of doing so, to enquire for It in the scriptures is only scriptural enquiry – how can it be Self-enquiry?

Sadhu Om: Refer to *Who am I?* where it is said, "…Self is within the five sheaths; but the scriptures are outside the five sheaths. Therefore seeking Self in the scriptures when It is to be found within by negating the five sheaths, is futile…"

392. When *mano-laya* is gained by restraining the breath, one should keenly enquire, using such a peaceful mind which is now condensed from the scattered five [sense-knowledges] into the one 'I'-consciousness, and know that *Sat-Chit* which is not the body.

Michael James: See also verse 516.

Sadhu Om: *Mano-laya* is a state in which the mind knows no objects, and it is of two kinds – sleep and *kevala-nirvikalpa-samadhi*. In sleep the mind gets no light from Self, and in *kevala-nirvikalpa-samadhi*, though the mind gets light form Self, it remains merely as the 'I'-thought, and the *vasanas* are neither allowed to function, nor are they destroyed. When one wakes up from either kind of *mano-laya*, the *vasanas* start functioning as before, and so no progress is made in *laya*, however long one may remain in it. Therefore it is said that it is not sufficient to stop with *mano-laya*, even if it is *kevala-nirvikalpa-samadhi*.

Laya results because the mind is restrained from dwelling upon external sense-objects, but though the mind is not wandering and is therefore peaceful in this state, one cannot progress further.

Whenever the mind wakes up from *laya*, it will be quiet and peaceful [i.e. it will not be wandering towards objects], and therefore one should make use of such a peaceful mind by directing it towards Self-attention;' because only through Self-attention can *mano-nasha* [i.e. destruction of the mind] be attained.

This verse clearly shows what Sri Bhagavan meant in *Upadesa Undiyar* verse 14, where He wrote that the mind which has been stilled by breath-control will be destroyed if it is engaged in "the one path" ["*vazhi*" in Tamil, "*eka chintana*" in Sanskrit]. This "one path" is nothing other than Self-enquiry, as this verse makes clear, and so we can certainly conclude that all the other interpretations which are recorded in some other books are not correct.

393. Those who take to the pure path of Self-enquiry are never derailed because, like the sun, this supremely direct path itself reveals to them its own unchallengeable clarity and uniqueness.

Sri Muruganar: Unlike *karma*, *bhakti*, *yoga*, etc., which critically analysed, have to yield to the other paths, changing their course and bending a bit, Self-enquiry never has to yield and change its course, because of the uniqueness of Self. Hence Sri Bhagavan calls the path of Self-enquiry the pure path and the direct one. Besides, since one has to take to at least a little Self-attention in order to reach the final Goal, even though one may have been advancing through some other path, this path is called the supreme path by Sri Bhagavan.

Since this path is compared to the sun, we should take Self to be the sun, and Self-enquiry to be its ray.

394. Since death is nothing but *pramada*, those who want to conquer death should always ward off *pramada*; and since this alone is essential, there is no rule prescribing a time or place to enquire into Self.

Michael James: *Pramada* means inadvertence, i.e. giving up on the way what has been undertaken; here *pramada* denotes slackness in Self-attention.

Like death, *pramada* may happen at any time or in any place, and therefore Self-attention should be vigilantly maintained at all times and in all places.

395. Since time, place, etc., which seem to exist, cannot have a real existence of their own apart from the undivided and perfect *Brahman*, none of them can be unsuitable for practicing Self-enquiry.

Sadhu Om: The Tamil word for 'unsuitable' [*vilakku*] can also mean 'target', and so the following alternative meaning can also be taken: "… nothing bound by them [i.e. time, place, etc.] should be taken as a target for meditation".

While taking this alternative meaning, "time, place etc., which seem to exist," should be understood to mean this whole universe of names and forms [which are all second and third persons]. Hence we are told in this verse that we should not take as objects of meditation any second or third person such as: (a) a place for the heart on the right-hand side of the chest; (b) any chakra or centre in the body; (c) any name or form of a God or Goddess; (d) any divine light or sound; etc. Refer also to verse 184, where the same idea is expressed.

396. One's unceasing effort to turn the mind – which is always extroverted due to the force of habit [cultivated in past births] – towards Self by the Self-enquiry "Who am I?" is [the significance of] the great war being fought between *devas* and *asuras* [which is described in the *Puranas*].

Sadhu Om: In India many stories are recorded in books known as the *Puranas*, which tell of the wars being fought between *devas* [gods] and *asuras* [demons]. These wars should not be regarded as mere myths or events that happened only in the distant past, they are going on even today. They are the constant battle which is always being fought in the life of a *sadhaka* between his liking to attend only to Self and the habitual outward-going tendencies of his mind.

397. Whenever a thought arises, instead of trying even a little either to follow it up or to fulfil it, it would be better to first enquire, "To whom did this thought arise?"

Sadhu Om: The ideas expressed in verses 397, 398 and 399 are also expressed in prose in *Who am I?*

398. When one thus inwardly enquires, "Is it not to me that this thought has arisen – then who am I?", the mind will return to subside in its Source, and the already risen thought will also vanish.

399. When one daily practices in this manner, since the impurities are being removed from the mind, it will become purer and purer to such an extent that the practice will become so easy that the mind will reach the Heart as soon as the enquiry is commenced.

400. Just as the creature which come out of the bushes to save their lives, being unable to bear with the heat of the wild forest-fire, are surely burnt to death, so all the *vasanas* hiding in the Heart will be destroyed, being unable to stand before the growing and blazing fire of the strength of Self-enquiry.

401. The thought "Who am I?", after destroying all other thoughts, will itself finally die just like the stick which is used to stir the funeral pyre, and then the supreme Silence will prevail for ever.

Sadhu Om: Refer also to *Who am I?*

402. When the delusion which has veiled Self, the Light of Consciousness of unlimited Bliss [*Sat-Chit-Ananda*], is destroyed by the clear enquiry "Who am I?", one's own Nature will shine forth gloriously as the *Atmakasha* [i.e. Space of Self].

403. Just as an iron ball which is heated in fire will itself shine as fire, when the impure *jiva* is burnt in the fire of Self-enquiry, it will itself shine as Self.

404. By enquiring, "Who am I, the deluded one who suffers so much?", the delusion will be dissolved, the Reality will be attained, *Jnana* will dawn, *Mouna* will flow forth and the Bliss of Peace will prevail.

405. It is only due to the delusion which is caused by not learning the Truth of Self that *jivas* are suffering. Therefore, always take to the practice of *Jnana* – the inward enquiry "Who am I that is suffering?"

406. By contact with the philosopher's stone – proper and

unceasing enquiry – the ghostly *jiva* will lose the rust of mental impurities and will be turned into the supreme Shiva.

Sri Muruganar and Michael James: Since enquiry is described as the philosopher's stone and the mental impurities are described as mental rust, the *jiva* should be taken to be the base material and Shiva to be the gold.

407. If the son of God, the *jiva* who has forgotten his real Nature [i.e. Self], eagerly enquires within, "Who am I that is lamenting over the miseries of life?', he will realise his greatness, namely that he is truly One with his Father – Self.

Michael James: This verse was given according to the doctrines of Christianity.

70 The True *Tapas*

Michael James: Sri Bhagavan here explained that *Tapas* means self-denial, and the true self-denial (ego-denial) is nothing but Self-abidance (*Atma-Nishta*).

408. The purpose of *Tapas* is to know that the supreme *Atma-Jnana* [Self-Knowledge] is graciously and naturally shining always in all creatures, and to experience It by being It; *tapas* is not to newly create or obtain *Jnana*.

409. "To fix the stupid and egotistical mind as One with the pure Shiva [i.e. Self], by subduing it within the Heart so that it cannot wander out through the sense-organs, is alone the best *tapas*," say the true *Tapasvins*.

410. Uninterruptedly maintaining *Atmakara-vritti* [i.e. the flow of Self-attention], which swallows within itself the appearance of the universe with all its differences, is, when pondered over, the only mark of the unique *Tapas*.

411. Alas, because of the delusion caused by not knowing that *tapas*, which is one's natural duty, should be

> **done with love, people torture themselves in the fire of miserable *tapas*, in spite of the fact that the Ocean of Bliss [the true Goal of *tapas*] is always brimming over.**

Sadhu Om: *Tapas* literally means scorching, or undergoing, self-inflicted tortures, but since these meanings seem to be inappropriate, Sri Bhagavan has given us a new definition for this word in *Upadesa Undiyar* verse 30. In that verse we told that *Atma-Nishta* [i.e. Self-abidance – which is the Ocean of Bliss] is the real *Tapas*.

There are some people who, in the name of *tapas*, torture their bodies by engaging in austerities such as *panchatapagni* [i.e. sitting for meditation surrounded by five fires – above and on four sides], etc. These activities can be called *tapas* in its literal sense, yet they are only performed for the fulfilment of desires, either in this world or in the next. Though these desires may be selfish [i.e. for one's own individual benefit] or unselfish [i.e. for the benefit of the whole world], they are possible only so long as the ego survives. The aim of true *tapas*, on the other hand, is Bliss, which can only be achieved when the ego is annihilated.

Therefore, highly discriminative people should perform the true *tapas* of destroying the ego. The only path or *tapas* which will destroy the ego is Self-attention [which is often known as Self-enquiry]. Is this Self-attention a self-inflicted torture or a scorching experience? According to the divine saying 'I am the Path and the Goal', the path must be as blissful as the Goal, and since everyone knows from his own experience in sleep that the state of egolessness is blissful, it is clear that attending to Self, which is the nearest and the dearest to all of us, will also be blissful, and it will not be an experience of torture or misery. Thus, since Self-attention is to be undertaken with such love and pleasure, why should it be regarded as being *tapas* in its literal sense? Therefore Sri Bhagavan declares that to think of *tapas* as being a miserable experience is due to delusion and ignorance, and thus He introduces a revolutionary idea about *tapas*.

Happiness is our true Nature, but through inattention born of ignorance, we leave it, come out and suffer. Hence our natural and happy duty is to lovingly restore Self-attention and to thus abide in our true Nature.

412. Silence – which is the experience of Shiva, the supreme *chit* [*jnana*] – is the true *tapas* by which *Brahma*n [*Tat* or *Sat*] is achieved.

413. Just as it is impossible to trace the path through which a bird flew in the sky and the path through which a fish swam in the water, so it is also impossible to trace the path by which *Jnanis* have reached the Self.

Michael James: The Path by which *Jnanis* reach Self is Self-enquiry, which is the real *Jnana-marga*, but since the ego itself vanishes on this path, not only is no trace left behind, but also no one is left to find it.

When it is said that "it is impossible to trace the path", it means that the path can neither be known or expressed because, although we are given clues to such as Self-attention, when the ego attempts through practice to know what Self-attention exactly is, the ego itself is lost. Refer also to verse 999 and note.

414. Union with the Feet of the Lord as the form of Love [*Bhakti*], in which all the ego's activities die, is the Path of *Siddhanta*. The loss of the ego by abiding in Self [*Atma-Nishta*], which is the supreme *Jnana* and Bliss, is the Path of *Vedanta*.

Sadhu Om: Since the annihilation of the ego is stressed in both the paths, *Siddhanta marga* [i.e. *Bhakti-marga*] and *Vedanta marga* [i.e. *Jnana marga*] are not different but one and the same.

415. Knowing *Para* [i.e. Self – the Supreme] through Self-enquiry, by discriminating between *Para* and *apara* [i.e. non-Self], by attaining inward dispassion towards *apara*, and by remaining where the notions 'I' and 'mine' are completely lost, is the way of life of *Jnanis*.

416. Know that the following is the right way by which the suffering *jiva* can revel in Shiva: reject God, world and soul as being false appearances in *Brahman*, just like the appearance of silver on a shell.

71 A Research on True Knowledge

Michael James: The Tamil word for knowledge is '*arivu*', which not only means true knowledge, i.e. pure consciousness (*chit*), but can also mean mind, the knowledge of sense-objects, the knowledge of the arts and sciences, etc; in this work it is therefore translated each time according to the particular sense in which it is used.

417. Shiva shines in the golden Heart-temple of Knowledge [i.e. Consciousness] as Knowledge Itself. Only those who know Him by the pure Eye of Knowledge are truly worshipping the Truth, because Knowledge Itself is the true Supreme Thing.

418. The highest *Jnana*, which is knowing the perfect Reality is knowing the Knowledge by Knowledge itself. Until the Knowledge is thus known by the Knowledge Itself, the mind will have no peace.

419. Just as the ornaments are known to be many and different but the gold is known to be one, so the sense-objects are known to be many and different. Here the gold signifies the one absolute Being-Knowledge which results from the destruction of the *chittam* [i.e. the store of *vasanas*], and which is devoid of the qualified and objective sense knowledges.

420. To know the sense-objects as true instead of knowing the truth of the seeing-knowledge [i.e. the seer] is due to ignorance born of false delusion. The True Knowledge is not learning all the arts which you want to know, but losing the imaginary relative knowledge in Self-Knowledge.

Sadhu Om: Refer to *Ulladu Narpadu* verse 12: "The knowledge which knows [objects] cannot be True Knowledge …"

421. Only the pure Knowledge of *Sat-Chit* [i.e. the Consciousness 'I am'] truly exists. All other [sense or mind] knowledges, which function in It as if true, are nothing but dark and fictitious ignorance; [hence] it is dangerous to believe them.

Sadhu Om: The plain and simple Knowledge 'I am', which is expe-

rienced by everyone in deep sleep, is the perfect Knowledge. Refer to *Maharshi's Gospel*, Part I, Chapter I; "Sleep is not ignorance, it is one's pure state; wakefulness is not Knowledge, it is ignorance. There is full awareness [i.e. knowledge] in sleep and total ignorance in waking…" [8th edition, 1969, p. 11].

422. All other knowledges are defective and petty; the experience of Silence [i.e. Self-Knowledge] is alone Perfect Knowledge. The different objective knowledges are merely superimposed on Self, the Pure Knowledge, and hence they are not true.

423. Will those Great Ones who have the pure *Jnana-drishti* [i.e. the outlook of *Jnana*] consider the objective outlook of the petty ego to be Knowledge at all? The Knowledge is only That which knows the Pure Knowledge, and not that which knows other things.

Sadhu Om: "…That which knows the Pure Knowledge…" is the Self-Knowledge which shines as 'I am'.

424. Though one has known many subtle, rare and wonderful things, can one be a *jnani* until one comes to know the knower of them? Know that one cannot be.

Sadhu Om: Refer to *Atma-Vidya* verse 3: "Without first knowing our Self, of what avail is it then to know anything else, for what else is there to know after Self is known?"

425. Tell me, O mind that madly rushes outwards, can there be any source from which all this universe springs forth other than that Knowledge which is never born out of another?

426. Why is knowledge often said to be the only base for anything and everything? Because Knowledge, which is the base for everything which rises [i.e. which comes into existence], remains as the sole base even for Its own existence.

Michael James: Read verse 428 along with this verse. Refer also to *Upadesa Undiyar* verse 23; "…there is no Consciousness [*Chit*] other than Existence [Sat] Itself to know Existence …".

427. A support [i.e. a base] is needed only for an inert thing which is *asat* [i.e. which is not real existence]. Why then does a necessity arise that WE, *Sat*-*Chit*, should need some other *Chit* as our support? It is because of the delusion by which we think that we are the impure *Chittam* [mind].

Michael James: There are two possible versions of verse 428:

428a. Because our real Nature is Itself *Sat* [Existence], unlike other things which are *asat*, know that the base for the ever-existing Consciousness is that same Self-existing Consciousness Itself.

428b. Since 'I', our real nature, ever shines as Existence [*Sat*], unlike other things which are non-existent [*asat*: i.e. which seem to exist at one time and not at another time], know that 'I' [Self], which shines of itself [i.e. without any other aid], is the base for the ever-existing Consciousness [*Chit*].

429. Thus, while that Consciousness, the Reality itself, is you, instead of knowing with that Consciousness that you are Consciousness itself and remaining as It is, you know the world, which rises out of you, the Consciousness, and suffer very much. Alas, what can I say about this!

Michael James: Though the world is seen outside, it is only an apparent manifestation rising from within.

430. Those who do not know through Self-enquiry what is the truth of their natural state [Self] mistake the alien body to be 'I' and see the world as different from themselves and hence suffer in delusion. All other things except that ['I'], which shines as the one undeluded Existence-Consciousness-Bliss [*Sat*-*Chit*-*Ananda*], are seen on account of the deceitful play of *maya*.

431. To one whose attention is only upon the things known [the five sense-objects] but not even the least upon the knower – to such a lump of mud [the fleshy

body] in the form of a human being, can any scripture teach true knowledge [*Jnana*]?

432. Is it not because you are knowledge [i.e. consciousness] itelf that you are able to know the world? If [instead of knowing the world] you turn your attention, taking that Consciousness alone as your target, It will Itself as the Guru reveal the Truth [i.e. Reality].

Sri Muruganar: 'Turn your attention taking that Consciousness alone as one's target': This is the state in which one consciously remains, not knowing other things and not forgetting oneself. Since throughout the waking and dream states the mind was in the habit of attending to other things, the second persons [i.e. the world, which is a mental conception], it can only conceive even God, who is in truth beyond mental conception, to be an object of perception. But now, when the mind attends to Self, Self destroys this illusory habit of the mind and makes it know: 'I do not exist, only Self, the real God, truly exists'. Thus Consciousness, one's target, itself as the Guru reveals the truth.

The mind's longing to see God in the form of an object [i.e. as a second person] is due to the forgetfulness of its true nature – Existence-Consciousness – and to its acting with doership as an individual. But when, giving up the objective attention, it remains as Consciousness itself, the aforesaid doership and forgetfulness are lost and the mind now understands that Self alone is the real God and thereby attains eternal Peace.

433. Only the truth of Self is worthy of being scrutinized and known. Taking It alone as the target, one should keenly attend to It and know It in the heart [i.e. within]. It can be known only by the silent and clear mind which is free from agitation and activity.

434. All kinds of knowledge [even the knowledge of all the arts and sciences] will completely merge into the Silence – the pure knowledge of Self. All other states [as well as knowledges] appear to exist only because of the play of *Chit*-***Sakti*** **[the knowing power, i.e. the mind], which exists in Self, the supreme and natural state of Bliss.**

Michael James: 'All other states' means all states of knowledge (consciousness) other than the Silence.

435. The natural consciousness of existence [I am], which does not rise to know other things, is the Heart. Since the truth of Self is clearly known only by this actionless Consciousness, which [merely] remains as Self, this [i.e. the Heart] alone is the supreme Knowledge.

Michael James: Actionless Consciousness is the Consciousness which does not have the action of rising and knowing other things.

Sri Muruganar: The word 'Heart' denotes Self and not a place. Being Self *[Atma Nishta]* is itself knowing Self *[Atma Jnana]*. Consciousness *[Chit]* knows existence *[Sat]* because existence is not other than consciousness.

436. All that is known should be known to be merely that knowledge [which knows them] and should merge into Knowledge – Self. One's very reality which shines in such an intensity of Self-abidance, utterly destroying all differences, is Liberation – the unequalled state.

Michael James: "that knowledge [which knows them]" is the mind.

437. Since the nature of Reality is non-dual [i.e. not two], true Knowledge cannot be the knowing of an other. Therefore, when the mind is absolutely free from delusion [i.e. does not know an other] and abides unwavering in beatitude – that is the true Knowledge.

Sadhu Om: Since the real Thing *[Sat]* is one and not many, the real Knowledge *[Chit]* must also be one: the knowledge of one's own existence, and it cannot be the knowing of many things. Hence, the Self-abidance in the form of 'I am', the feeling of mere first person singular, wherein the mind, the distorted Knowledge that many things, which everybody has now, has been put to an end, and its moving nature, i.e. knowing other things, has been stopped, alone is the true Knowledge.

438. Know that Knowledge is non-attachment, Knowledge

is purity, Knowledge is union with God, that unforgettable Knowledge is fearlessness [*abhayam*], Knowledge is the elixir of immortality, Knowledge alone is everything.

Michael James: Here and in the following two verses Knowledge is used in the sense of pure consciousness.

Abhayam may alternatively mean: 'the place of refuge'.

439. The Knowing of the breadth and length, the bottom and top – the depth and height – of Knowledge is nothing but the blissful stillness of mind; it is impossible for even gods to know that state of Knowledge.

Sri Muruganar: Since Knowledge transcends all limitations and measurements, it is beyond comprehension. The merging of the mind-knowledge in the non-dual Knowledge *[Kevala Arivu]* and remaining there in Bliss alone is the knowing of the Knowledge.

440. Without Knowledge [Self] there is no world; without Knowledge there is no soul; without Knowledge there is no God. Therefore, the knowing of Knowledge [as defined in the previous verse] is the ultimate Goal.

72 Nirvana

Michael James: '*Nirvana*' means unveiling, i.e. the shedding of the five sheaths. See also *Sri Arunachala Aksharamanamalai,* verse 30.

441. Just as the snake sheds its skin without any suffering, it is our worthy duty to shed the five sheaths, which cause misery on account of fast attachment to them.

442. *Jiva-nirvana* is the state in which the attachment to the five sheaths has been removed in order to enjoy fully the silent Bliss born out of the Grace of the Lord, Self, who is the Consciousness-space.

Sadhu Om: This verse can also be interpreted in the following metaphorical and mystic way: The bride [the *jiva*], in order to be

granted the full enjoyment of her bridegroom [Self], has to shed her shyness in form of attachment to the five sheaths.

73 The Attainment of Self

443. Since it is our common experience [for one and all] that we remain bodiless and shine alone even in a state of nothingness [i.e. sleep] where the world does not exist, losing permanently our identification as 'I' with the form of five sheaths, is indeed the attainment of Self [or Self-realization]. Thus should you be sure!

Michael James: In the understanding of most aspirants, 'Self-realization' is the attainment of something – Self, which they believe they do not have as yet, while in fact 'Self-realization' is the loss of something – the ego, which is already there. "… To make room, it is enough that the lumber be removed; room is not brought in from elsewhere" says Sri Bhagavan in *Maharshi's Gospel* Part I, chapter 4 (see also *Maha Yoga*, 7th edition, page 121).

444. Since, when the ego is destroyed, the Self-sun shines as the sole Reality, putting an end to this dream, which is false, and bringing about the true awakening – the mere destruction of the ego, through Self-enquiry, is the attainment of Self [or Self-realization]. Thus should you know!

Michael James: 'The dream which is false' is this present waking state. 'the true awakening' is the state of *Turiya* or *Jnana*.

445. When 'I' and 'mine' are destroyed by the clear true Knowledge, which is free from the questionable knowledge ['I am the body'], even while living in this illusory world, that is the state in which one abides as That.

Michael James: 'free from the questionable knowledge' may also be translated as 'free from the five sense-knowledges …'

The purpose of the two previous verses is to describe the true nature of the attainment of Self; since the *Mahavakya* '*I am That*' denotes this state of Self-attainment (Self-realization) the

destruction of the ego is also the attainment of '*I am That*', as is described in this verse.

446. Since the reality, the source [of 'I', the ego], shines so very subtle in the heart as to be known only to a very subtle attention, it is impossible for those whose mind is as gross and as blunt as the head of a pestle to attain the target!

Sadhu Om: Refer to *Vichara Sangraham*, chapter 8: '… Just as it is impossible to separate the fibres of a silk cloth with a thick crow-bar and just as it is impossible to find out the nature of minute things with the help of a lamp flickering in the wind, the experience of Self cannot be gained by a mind which is gross and wavering due to the influence of dullness [*tamo-guna*] and activity [*rajo-guna*]; because It [Self] shines very subtle and motionless…"

74 'The Conclusive Knowledge to be Obtained' or 'The Well-established Knowledge'

Michael James: The title of this chapter has two meanings:

1) 'The conclusive knowledge to be obtained (through reflection)', and

2) 'The well-established knowledge (the *Jnana* of the *Jnani*)'.

Out of the four verses in this chapter, the first three deal with the conclusion which we have to reach through reading and reflection, and the fourth verse describes the state of unshakeable Self-knowledge of a *Jnani*.

447. Because in the perfect Thing – Silence [Self], no thought rises, because place is merely a thought, and because the two other places [second and third persons] rise only after the rising of 'I', 'I' [the first person] is the first place.

Sadhu Om: In Tamil grammar, (1) 'I', the first person, (2) 'you', the second person, and (3) 'he, she, it, or they', the third person, are called the first place, second place and third place respectively, unlike in most other languages. Those who do deep reflection [*manana*] i.e. deep thinkers, can find out that this is a good clue for the spiritual quest. How? Time and place [space] are the first two conceptions [illusions] born of *maya*. In this verse instructions

about the nature of 'place' are given, whereas in verses 747 and 748 of this work and in verses 15 and 16 of *Ulladu Narpadu* the nature of 'time' is well described.

Because Self is mere Being, which has no rising, it is to be known that even the first person, which has a rising, is not there. Refer also to the 14th verse of *Ulladu Narpadu* which says: "…When the first person ceases to exist through enquiry into the truth of that first person…"

Ego is thought identifying as 'I' a body which is bound by time and space. Therefore, time and place cannot but be found interwoven in every thought that rises from the ego. Though, at first, it may seem to be a wonder to hear that no one can make any thought without time and place, after a little reflection it will be found that it is an undeniable truth. Let us now see this verse once again in the light of this explanation.

Since out of the three places, first, second and third, 'I' is the one that rises first, Sri Bhagavan points out that 'I' is the foremost among the place conceptions. Further, it is pointed out that, since place is a mere thought, even 'I', the first place is merely a thought. Moreover, by pointing out the logical inference: 'No thought can rise in Self, since the form of Self, the perfect thing, is Silence', Sri Bhagavan concludes that even the least rising of 'I', the ego, is not possible there.

Just as 'I', which among the three places [first, second and third places] is taken for spiritual research stands as the first and the source of all places, so also the 'present', which among the three tenses [past, present and future] is taken for spiritual research, stands as the first and source of all divisions of time. Just as 'I', the first place disappears when enquired into, the 'present', the first time, also disappears on enquiry, revealing the timeless and placeless [spaceless] nature of the supreme, Self. Since even the first time, i.e. the 'present', is merely a thought, just like the first person it cannot have a rising in Self. Thus, since Self transcends time and space, *Ajata* (see the note to verse 100) must be known to be the right conclusive knowledge to be obtained, and this is to be understood to be the aim of this verse.

Finally, from the three reasons given in this verse, we have to draw six conclusions:

1) Self is not a place
2) place does not exist in Self
3) 'I' is a thought
4) 'I' is the first place
5) Self has no rising
6) Self is not the first place.

448. That which rises as 'I' in the body is mind. When an attempt is made to find out wherefrom this thought 'I' rises in the body, it [the 'I'-thought, or mind, which thus searches] reaches the Heart, therefore, it is indeed from Heart [Self] that the mind rises.

Sadhu Om: These are the words of Sri Bhagavan in *Who am I?* When we wake up the 'I'-feeling rises from one place in the body and then spreads all over the body; what is described in this verse as 'first' is that place. However, Sri Bhagavan here gives us a clue that by so tracing the 'I'-thought, a place will not be found, but the tracing power, the one who traces, will dissolve into Self.

449. Other than thoughts there is no God, world or soul. In all thoughts, the thought 'I' is pervading. This 'I'-thought is the first of all thoughts. The source from which the 'I'-thought rises is the Heart.

Michael James: When in this verse and the previous verse Heart is said to be the source from which the mind rises, Heart should not be taken to be a place. It must be understood to be the thing from which mind emerges. The reason for asserting so is given in the next verse.

450. Those who abide firmly in Self will never know any other thing as a base [i.e. as a place] but Self. They, the really [*Sat*] shining [*Chit*] One, affording a place to all things – as does the screen [in a cinema show] – will make them shine [as if real].

Michael James: The *ajnani* feels that he is only the body, and therefore he experiences the universe as outside of himself. That is, he thinks that all things are existing or somewhere in space; in his view, earth or space are the base for all. The *Jnani*, on the other hand, does not limit Himself as a body and therefore knows

that He is not in the universe but that it is in Him. That is to say, He experiences that His existence is the base on which, or place in which, all other things, including earth and space, exist. He knows that because He is, everything seems to exist, and hence they are in Him and He alone is their base.

75 The Experience of Happiness

451. To the extent that one dives within the Heart, to that extent one experiences that happiness which, though really shining as the unbroken nature of one's Self, is experienced interruptedly in so many different ways [by means of the sense-objects].

452. If you firmly fix your mind in the Heart, the true knowledge will dawn. Being then drowned in the experience of the joyous peace of *Sada Siva*, you will shine as the Sun of true knowledge with the splendour of a thousand rising suns.

Michael James: *Sada Siva* is the eternal supreme goodness, i.e. Self.

453. Whenever thoughts [desires] are satisfied, the mind reaches its source [the Heart] and experiences only the happiness of Self. This indeed happens in this life when the liked are obtained, when the dislikes are removed, and during the time of abiding in Self [*samadhi*], of swoon and of cherished sleep.

Sadhu Om: Refer to *Who am I?*

454. In this foolish life of egotistic delusion conceived by the petty mean mind, which is a contracted form of the *chittam*, is there anyone who experiences the true happiness of serene clarity which shines forth when the *chittam* remains without even the least thinking!

Michael James: *Chittam* is the storehouse of the knowledge and the consequent tendencies (*vasanas*) gathered from birth to birth.

76 Sleep

455. Even though people enjoy the highest happiness in deep sleep, where no other thing exists, instead of understanding that it is the true happiness and trying to achieve it in life [i.e. instead of finding the means – the Self-enquiry – to experience it uninterruptedly even in the waking state], craving to obtain other things, sense objects, as if they were the remedies for the miseries that occur, is utter foolishness.

456 Ignorance is concerned only with the other objects which are known to the mad ego in the two states other than sleep and swoon [i.e. waking and dream], but is not concerned with Self.

Michael James: 'the other objects' are objects other than Self.

457. Terming sleep as a 'sheath' [*kosha*] is only on account of the foolishness of Self-forgetfulness in which the waking state is considered to be a state of knowledge [*prajna*]. If the concept that the waking state is a worthy and true state of knowledge [*prajna*] is lost, then the very sleep will shine as the one, non-dual Reality.

Sadhu Om: Since one takes the ego-consciousness [the 'I' am the body'-feeling], which exists in waking and dream, to be the real consciousness of one's existence, [one is in] a state of unconsciousness and ignorance. But if, by means of enquiry, one realises one's real state as the pure self-existent consciousness, devoid of the attachment to the body, the ego-consciousness which was experienced in waking and dream as one's self-existence will be found to be unreal, and the knowledge that the state which was referred to till then as sleep is the perfect, real Self-conciousness will dawn. It is only to make this clear that Sri Bhagavan said in *Maharshi's Gospel*: "Sleep is not ignorance, it is one's pure state; wakefulness is not knowledge, it is ignorance. There is full knowledge in sleep, and total ignorance in waking …"

458. That one who, not knowing his real greatness, is deluded into thinking that he was unable to see [or know] anything during sleep is only the fully fattened

ego, the root, who was considering himself during the previous two states [waking and dream] to be the seer, [and it is not You, Self]!

Sadhu Om: For Self, which was shining during sleep, there was no delusion of such knowledge and ignorance. All these are only for the ego. It is only the ego, who was absent during sleep, who says after rising in the waking state that he did not know either other things or even himself.

459. When the triads [seer-seen-seeing, knower-known-knowing] disappear due to the destruction of the base, the foolish ego, and when the manyness [the states of waking and dream] is thus completely destroyed, the pure, broad Daylight [Self] that then shines like a hundred suns is the Night of Siva [*Sivarathri*].

Sadhu Om: *Sivarathri* is an auspicious night when all *jivas* including Brahma and Vishnu, worship Lord Siva. The beauty to be noticed here is that such a night is explained to be pure broad daylight. Why? Since no other thing is known there, it is night; and since the pure consciousness shines there, it is bright daylight.

460. When the beginningless, impure tendencies, which were the cause for waking and dream, are destroyed, then sleep, which was [considered to be] leading to bad results [i.e. *tamas***] and which was said to be a void and ridiculed as nescience, will be found to be *Turiyatitam* itself.**

461. *Anandamaya* is said to be a sheath [*kosha*] because of the great desire towards the waking state of the one identifying with the *vijnanamaya kosha*. But when the strong ego identifying with *vijnanamaya* is destroyed, the *anandamaya* that survives will lose the nature of a sheath [*kosha*] and remain as the supreme Bliss.

Sadhu Om: Only because we have desires in the form of subtle tendencies to leave sleep often and to rise and make *pravrittis* in the *vijnanamaya kosha* [the intellect – *buddhi*], the *sastras* describe

the blissful state of sleep as a sheath. It is only one's attachment, the desire to be active in *vijnanamaya*, that drags one out of the *anandamaya kosha* [sleep]. If this attachment is lost, the leaving of the blissful sleep will not happen. Then, the uninterrupted state of bliss [in sleep], instead of being a mere sheath, will shine as our natural, unending, true state of Bliss.

462. If one achieves the unshakeable state of Self-attention – one's Existence-Consciousness – till sleep overtakes one, one need not be heart-broken, feeling, 'Ah, the delusion of ignorant sleep, the forgetfulness, has overcome me!" [i.e. sleep will never come].

Sadhu Om: Since the knowing of the consciousness 'I am' continues even there, it will not be a sleep, but will be experienced as the state of the shining of the Self.

77 The Real Thing

463. The rope, the true knowledge [Self], into which disappears the wonderful snake, the mind-delusion – which exists so long as it is not enquired into and becomes non-existent when enquired into – alone is the real Thing.

Michael James: The whole universe, which seems to exist on account of the wonderful illusion, the mind, is not the real Thing. The real Thing is only Self-knowledge, the One, into which the whole universe disappears when mind, its root, merges. Since non-enquiry alone is the reason for the seeming existence of the mind, Self-enquiry alone is the only way to know the real Thing.

464. The knowledge of the supreme Bliss which shines naturally [as 'am'], without any desire and beyond differences, in the well-established Self-abidance [*samadhi*] is the real Thing.

465. Since at all times and in all places the unmistakable Self ['I am'] alone shines eternally as the one Thing, except That, all other things at all times and in all places have to be dismissed as false.

Michael James: What is called 'time and place' itself is false.

78 The Loss of Doership

466. The pure Bliss of peace will shine within only for those who have lost the sense of doership. For, this foolish sense of doership alone is the poisonous seed that brings forth all evil fruits.

467. Instead of going on, driven by the restless thoughts, performing actions such as 'I should do this, I should give up that' as if they were worthy to be done, acting according to how the Grace of God, the Lord of our soul, leads us, is the right form of truly worshipping Him.

468. In ancient days the chaste lady [Draupadi] had her honour saved and her sari lengthened by the Grace of Lord Krishna only when at last, letting go of her own hold on her sari, she lifted up both her hands in complete surrender to Him; and the strong wicked one [Duchasana] who was stripping her fell down abashed.

Sadhu Om: So long as Draupadi was trying to hold her sari by her own hands lest it should be stripped off and was calling Sri Krishna for help, His Grace did not begin to function. But as soon as, having complete faith in His gracious protection, she gave up holding her clothes with her own hands and lifted them above her head, her surrender became complete and hence His Grace began to function by making her sari grow unendingly and by making the wicked Duchasana, who was stripping her, fall down in a swoon. This incident is pointed out there in order to instruct us that we should give up the sense of doership and should thus surrender to God completely and unreservedly.

469. Those who, like a child who does not seek to know what is good for it [but leans upon its parents], purely depend upon the Mother, *Chit-Sakti*, the Grace of the Lord, reach His feet and remain naturally in His service [i.e. abide in Self], having lost all actions-done-with-doership, which are caused by the defectful delusion [*maya*] 'I am the body'.

Sadhu Om: Rather than upon their own effort [which is only the

sense of doership], devotees or aspirants always depend upon the power of the Grace of the Supreme. This power is personified here as the Mother. She is described as '*Chit-Sakti*' because Grace shines in everyone in the form of Self-Consciousness – the *sphurana* 'I-I'. Since this is purely on account of the unaccountable mercy of the Lord, such Grace of His is described here as the Mother.

The correct way of understanding Sri Bhagavan's instruction here is that aspirants should completely and without doubting cling to the Self-consciousness 'I-I'. Like a child which, not even trying to know what is good for itself, depends solely upon its mother, if an aspirant, not even trying to know any scriptures, trying to do any yoga, or expecting any help from outside, simply clings to the 'I'-consciousness, that alone is sufficient and he will easily and surely be saved form all delusion and pitfalls.

Since clinging to the 'I'-consciousness is merely a 'being' and not a 'doing', neither does it need doership nor does it turn out to be action [*karma*] even. Thus the aspirant naturally ever abides in Self. Sri Bhagavan advises that this Self-abidance alone is the state of one's remaining in the service of the Lord.

470. The Lord who has fed you today will ever do so well. Therefore, live carefree, placing all your burden at His feet and having no thought of tomorrow or the future.

471. Know well that even performing *tapas* and *yoga* with the intention 'I should become an instrument in the hands of the Lord Siva' is a blemish to complete self-surrender, which is the highest form of being in His service.

Sadhu Om: Since even the thought 'I am an instrument in the Lord's hand' is a means by which the ego retains its individuality, it is directly opposed to the spirit of complete self-surrender, the 'I'-lessness. Are there not many good-natured people who engage themselves in prayers, worship, yoga and such virtuous acts with the aim of achieving power form God and doing good to the world as one divinely commissioned? It is exposed here that even such endeavours are egotistical and hence contrary to self-surrender.

472. One's thus becoming a slave to the Lord and one's remaining quiet and silent, devoid even of the egotistical thought 'I am His slave', is Self-abidance, and this is the supreme Knowledge.

Sadhu Om: How the same supreme knowledge which is obtained through the path of *Jnana* [Self-enquiry] is obtained even through the path of *Bhakti* [self-surrender] is shown in this verse.

473. Seated in the Heart of everyone as Heart, the Lord will ordain everything according to one's destiny [*prarabdha*]. Therefore, if we unswervingly abide in Self, our source, all will happen unerringly.

474. Those who have the strong faith, "He who has planted this tree will water it", will never be distressed. If he [who planted it] sees the tree drying up, let even that pathetic sight be only his burden.

Michael James: Devotees with great faith in God never feel concern for the needs of their life, because they are so sure that God will never abandon them. Even when it happens that they are not provided with their needs, they do not feel that they are afflicted; they simply endure with it patiently, feeling that it is only God who has to suffer by seeing them troubled. Hence on all occasions they are happy. This verse thus assures that for such devotees there is no misery at all in life.

475. Since God alone is the root, all that is offered to Him will go to the whole banyan tree, the world and souls which sprout out from Him, the root.

Sadhu Om: Submitting oneself to God is like watering a banyan tree at its root. If, rejecting this self-surrender, which is nothing but the state of true knowledge, one engages oneself in the world thinking that one is doing service to the world, it is just like spraying water on the leaves and branches of the banyan tree. On the other hand, if one surrenders oneself to God, truly that alone is the real service to the whole world and all the souls.

Here, some may doubt that this instruction seems to contradict the 5th verse of *Upadesa Undiyar*. But in truth it is not so. How? Verse 5 of *Upadesa Undiyar* points out that worshipping the

universe by imagining it to be God is only a thought-process [*enni vazhipadal*], and that its fruit is also only the purification of one's own mind [*karuttai tirutti* – as pointed out in verse 3]; such worship is not for the benefit of the universe. But by surrendering oneself to God, thought or imaginations stop and one attains the state of perfect knowledge. Attaining this supreme knowledge alone is truly helping or serving the world. Hence, the instruction given in verse 5 of *Upadesa Undiyar* is for those *sadhakas* who want to gain purification of mind [*Chitta-suddhi*], whereas the instruction given in this present verse is for those *sadhakas* who want truly to serve the whole world. Therefore, if we scrutinize in this way, it becomes clear that these two instructions do not contradict each other.

How is the true knowledge alone the best service to the world? Let us see. Suppose one dreams in his sleep that his friends are wounded by a tiger. Rather than his supplying medicine to his dream-friends, would not his waking up from his sleep be doing real help to them? No other efforts taken in the dream itself will be a real service to them. So also, realising Self, which is the real awakening alone will be the only proper way of serving the whole universe.

Since jumping into service of the world with a sense of doership will increase the egoism of an aspirant instead of giving him *chitta-suddhi*, the real benefit of *karma yogi*, Sri Bhagavan, with the intention of saving aspirants from such ruin, gives them proper instruction in this verse.

79 The Attainment of Actionlessness

476. Whether or not one is performing actions, if the delusion of individuality – the ego, 'I am the doer of actions' – is completely annihilated, that is the attainment of actionlessness.

Sadhu Om: People generally think that the attainment of actionlessness is a state in which one should remain still, giving up all activities. But this is wrong. Sri Bhagavan Ramana proclaims that the loss of doership alone is the right kind of actionlessness, and this alone is *nishkamya karma* – action done without any desire for result.

80 Self-Surrender

477. To him who surrenders himself [‘I’ and ‘mine’] to the Lord, the Lord gives Himself here and now. Only such a one who has thus lost himself [in God] and gained the knowledge of *Brahman*, remains ever in the experience of the pure supreme Bliss of Siva.

Sri Muruganar and Michael James: Surrendering oneself to God means surrendering the notions ‘I’ and ‘mine’. The Lord’s giving Himself means that, after the loss of ‘I’ and ‘mine’, Existence-Consciousness-Bliss, alone remains. To denote the nature of his shining forth as Existence-Consciousness-Bliss, Sri Bhagavan says that ‘such a one gains the Knowledge [*Chit*] and drowns in Bliss [*ananda*]’. Since Existence-Consciousness-Bliss, which is one’s own nature, takes no time to shine forth as soon as ‘I’ and ‘mine’ are lost, it is said in this verse that the Lord gives Himself ‘here and now’.

478. When scrutinized well, what results from all the efforts made in *Bhakti-marga* is that one’s ego-form dissolves through the strength of intense meditation on the Feet of the Lord, and the individuality is lost at His Feet by self-surrender.

Michael James: How does the ego-form dissolve through the strength of intense meditation on the Feet of the Lord? Intense meditation on His Feet is possible only when there is intense love towards Him. Because of such intense love for Him, the aspirant does not care for his own body and its needs. Thus he loses interest in his own individuality and hence his ego-form is dissolved. It is to be noted here, however, that mere concentration without love cannot bring forth egolessness.

479. Erase your individuality, which cannot have a stand separate from the Lord, who shines as everything. The right definition of supreme devotion, where the blissful peace prevails, is the surrender of the evil fickle ego-self.

480. “Offer the self to the Lord”, they say. Then whose else is it but His already? Therefore, it is one’s duty

to repent for having stolen His possession [as 'I' and 'mine'] and to restore it back to His Lotus Feet.

Sri Muruganar: Those who say "We should surrender ourself to the Lord" do not have an accurate insight into devotion [*pra-bhakti*]. Self-surrender would become an endeavour [*tapas*] only if there were a separate freedom for the *jiva* to do; is it not so? But since the so-called *jivatma* is ever the possession of the Lord, having no freedom of his own, his foremost duty is that being ashamed of his act of stealing by rising as an independent entity, 'I', he should merge back into Him once for all and become non-existent.

481. There will be no cause for fear for one whose mind abides by the will of the Lord praying, "O Lord, let nothing happen according to my wish; let only Thy will be done".

482. Not giving the least room in one's heart – which is having a great love towards attending towards Self, the true form of God – to any thought raised by *vasanas* is the right way of offering oneself to the Lord.

Sadhu Om: These are the words of Grace given by Sri Bhagavan in *Who am I?*: "Giving no room at all to the rising of thoughts other than the thought of Self [*Atma-chintanai* – i.e. Self-attention] and being firmly established in Self is surrendering oneself to the Lord". Refer also to verse 1189.

483. Giving up all one's wishes through the attitude "Thy wish alone is mine" is the state of complete surrender, in which the evil ego, the original veiling, the first-rising one, is annihilated. Thus should you know.

484. When inwardly enquired, where can the thief exist who has with attachment and desire grabbed as 'I' and 'mine' the possessions [the soul, body, world and so on] of the supreme infinite Lord?

Sadhu Om: Since the mind, body and world rise from Self [God], they are described as the possessions of God.

This verse and the next explain how Self-enquiry and self-surrender result in each other, the result being egolessness.

485. When the ego, losing all its mischievousness, dies in Self-abidance [*nishtha*] by being a prey to the power of Siva [*Siva-Sakti*] and becomes inert like a log, since the Bliss ending all miseries is experienced there, only then is self-surrender true.

486. Offering oneself with great devotion to the Lord, who shines as pure Self, is just like breaking the toe off the idol of *Ganapathi* made of sweet jaggery and offering it to the idol itself.

Michael James: Refer to the footnote in *The Path of Sri Ramana* Part II, part 93, for the story of the jaggery *Ganapathi*.

Sri Muruganar and Sadhu Om: When even self-surrender, which is so much glorified in dualism as the highest and final form of devotion to God, is thus exposed by Sri Bhagavan in this *Upadesa* to be meaningless, we should consider of what avail all other forms of worship will be! Therefore, remaining quiet, abiding in Self, giving no room to the rising of 'I', which is the sin of usurping God's possession, is the best of all worships.

487. Unconditionally place your mind at the Feet of the Lord who has *Sakti* on His left. Then, since the tricky 'I' and 'mine' are dead, the glorious, blissful Supreme Self will shine triumphantly.

Michael James: 'The Lord who has *Sakti* on His left' is a traditional way of referring to Lord Siva.

81 The Attitude Towards Enemies

488. Good people [aspirants] should not with dejection hate enemies even a little, however bad they may be. For even hatred, like desire, is fit to be hated.

Sadhu Om: This verse gives the same *upadesa* given by Sri Bhagavan in *Who am I?*: "One should not dislike others, no matter how bad they are. It is both likes and dislikes that are to be disliked."

489. Since that [this body, and the ego, the form of which is 'I am the body'] which is rejected by an aspirant as 'not I' is the same as that which is ridiculed by his

enemies, for an aspirant who wants to destroy the ego [himself], the various insults from his enemies are just like an anvil to the goldsmith.

Sadhu Om: An aspirant means one who truly wants to destroy his ego-sense. He and his ego-sense are one and the same. Through the paths of both self-surrender and Self-enquiry, what he rejects or hates is the ego or himself. Since those [his enemies] who hate or scold him are also doing the same, they are pointed out here to be great helpers in his project. This is explained by the example of a goldsmith and his anvil. Because the anvil is resisting from below each of his hammer-blows, the goldsmith is able to shape his metal properly. If the anvil is soft, all the efforts of the goldsmith will be in vain. Similarly, the more appreciation an aspirant receives, the less will be the subsidence of his ego. Thus, rather than his appreciators, his enemies are helping the aspirant in his *sadhana*.

490. Only that mighty one who has the great valour to conquer hatred by love is a true Sage [*muni*].

Sri Muruganar: "Hatred cannot end hatred" was the teaching of Buddha. However, even some spiritual aspirants, on seeing atrocities and thinking that it is their duty to attack the wrong-doers, jump into the matter with anger. To point out that it is not proper for them to do so, this instruction was given.

82 The Simplicity of Life

491. If some men of abundant wealth were to give up willingly a few of their luxurious modes of living, millions of pitifully suffering poor could live.

492. Since the gracious Lord produces the needful food for all creatures only in the needed quantity, if one consumes more than what is needed to sustain life, it is a sin of stealing violently other's food. Thus should you know.

Sri Muruganar: Although this verse mentions only food, it is applicable to all the necessities of life. Whatever one heaps more than necessary is nothing but heaping sins. This is well confirmed by the next verse.

83 Chapter Concerning the Crime of Excess

493. By the crime of excess, even the nectar will become poison. By the crime of excess, many are the evils. Hence one should realize the crime of excess and remove it.

Sri Muruganar: Though it is said that fasting and non-sleep are in a way an aid to spiritual progress, excess of them is certainly harmful. *Bhagavad Gita* points out: "*For he who sleeps more or utterly restrains sleep, and for he who eats more or fasts more, there is no success in yoga.*" Sri Bhagavan also used to say that more than fasting, *sattvic* food in moderate quantities is the proper aid for *sadhana*.

84 Humility

494. One's greatness increases to the extent one becomes humble. The reason why God is Supreme to such an extent that the whole universe bows to Him, is His sublime state of humility in which the deluded ego never rises unknowingly.

495. For a wise aspirant who seeks to gain true greatness, it is best to pay his homage [*namaskarams*] to others until complete egolessness is achieved. On the other hand, it is indeed dangerous for him to accept homage from others.

Sadhu Om: The wise aspirant mentioned here is only he who aims at Self-realization. Since the ego subsides by doing *namaskarams* to others, it is pointed out to be 'best', and since the ego waxes by accepting *namaskarams* from others, it is pointed out to be 'indeed dangerous'.

496. Is it not on account of His behaving so humbly, like one willingly ever in the service of every creature, that God stands worthy of all the glorious worships ever performed by all the worlds?

497. By His seeing Himself in all, by His being humble even to His devotees who bow to everyone, and by His naturally remaining at such a pinnacle of meek-

ness that nothing can be meeker than Himself, the state of being Supreme has come to the Lord.

Sadhu Om: Through verses 494, 496 and 497, Sri Bhagavan reveals a unique and surprising truth, that is, He explains how God stands worthy of being worshipped by all the worlds. Sri Bhagavan points out here that it is because God is naturally and lovingly humble to everyone in all His own creation. The following incident will prove that Bhagavan Sri Ramana, for this same reason, is none but God Himself.

A devotee asked Sri Bhagavan, "What is your feeling when hundreds of people come and do *pranams* to you?" Without hesitation, Sri Bhagavan replied: "First I do my *namaskarams* to each one of them as soon as they enter this room, and then only they do so. Subsiding one's ego is the right and real form of doing *namaskarams*. Do I not have more chances each day to do such *namaskarams* than anyone who comes here?"

This reply of His contains a lot of secret and deep meaning to ponder over. The essence of the instruction given here is that being ever humble, without allowing the rising of the ego, is the only way to achieve greatness.

498. Since mind itself is both the minutest [*anu*] and the biggest [*mahat*], Self, the Reality which is beyond the mind, is transcendent [*atitam*]. Besides, Self is bigger than all that is known as biggest and minuter than all that is known as minutest.

Sadhu Om: Refer to the 5th stanza of *Atma Vidya Kirtanam* [*The Song on the Science of Self*], in which Sri Bhagavan says that Self is the Space containing the mind-space [which in turn contains the physical space].

499. The hollow and flimsy straw floats high on the surface of the sea, while the heavy pearl lies low at the bottom of the sea. Likewise, though the worthless one is positioned above, he is really low, and though the great one is positioned below, he is never low.

Sadhu Om: The last two lines of this verse are verse 973 of *Tirukkural*, the 3rd verse in the chapter entitled 'Greatness'.

One day, some devotees contrived to send away from the presence of Sri Bhagavan a person who adamantly wanted a seat no less high than that of Sri Bhagavan. Guessing what had happened, Sri Bhagavan at once remarked, pointing his finger above his head, “Oh, you are very happy in driving him away; but what will you do with this one?” Just above the head of Sri Bhagavan, there was a monkey sitting on the branch of a tree stretching its tail towards him! The devotees felt repentant for their mistake. Is not this incident a direct and practical explanation of this verse?

85 What is Worthy to be Done

500. Worthy to be done is Self-enquiry; worthy to be gained is the glory of Self; worthy to be given up is the ego-sense; worthy to be merged into is one’s own source, so that cares and anxieties dies.

501. Worthy to be achieved is true knowledge; worthy to be contemplated by the mind are the Feet of the Lord; surely worthy to be joined is the company of Sages [*satsang*]; worthy to have welling up in the heart is Bliss.

Michael James: Verse 1144 is also to be read here.

PART TWO

THE PRACTICE OF THE TRUTH

(Tattuvam Anusantana Viyal)

1 Chapter Concerning the Greatness of Instruction

(Upadesa Matchit Tiran)

502. Know that the wise words of the One [the *Sadguru*] who is well established in the Heart are the best guide for the bewildered and deluded minds of the devotees to free themselves from running after the mean senses and to reach inwardly their goal.

503. The true knowledge [*jnana*] will not dawn without exploring within the essence of the instruction 'That Thou Art' uttered unceasingly through the speech of His glance by the *Sadguru,* Self, the form of Siva [on earth], dwelling in the hearts of His devotees.

504. The uninterrupted shining of Self, the life of life, as the natural consciousness 'I-I' in the heart is the nature of God's giving unbroken *upadesa* to the worthy disciple.

Sadhu Om: This verse explains further the ideas revealed in the instruction: "For a few highly mature souls it so happens that the Lord reveals the Reality from within by His being the Knowledge of their knowledge", given as a reply to the eighth question: "How is it that some great Ones attain the supreme knowledge even without a Guru?", in the chapter '*Upadesa*' in the book *Upadesa Manjari* given by Sri Bhagavan. This verse explains how Self, being the Guru within, teaches the true knowledge to a fully mature soul even without taking a human form outside. The shining of 'I-I', the essence of the consciousness 'am', is the silent teaching of the inner Guru, Self. Since the supreme, non-dual knowledge is nothing but the Self-consciousness 'I am', its shining as 'I-I' itself is the silent inner advice of the Guru inducing the disciple [the mind] to abide ever in It. This is how Self acts as Guru from within.

2 Chapter Concerning the *Mahavakyas*

(Mahavakkiyat Tiran)

505. Churned out of the many sayings that remove ignorance which are contained in the four *Vedas*, the one essential phrase denoting the absolute truth, Silence, is 'the oneness of the individual soul and the Supreme' [*jiva-brahma-aikya*].

Michael James: The *mahavakya* 'That Thou Art' (*tattvamasi*) also denotes this.

506. For the highly mature souls who seek the supreme *sat-chit-ananda* in order to free themselves from the scorching heat of birth [and death], it is by the enquiry into only the word 'Thou', which [out of the three words 'That', 'Thou' and 'Art'] denotes the nature of the individual soul, that the glory of Liberation is attained.

Sadhu Om: We should remember here Sri Bhagavan's instruction in verse 32 of *Ulladu Narpadu* as to what an earnest and sincere disciple should do when he hears the *Mahavakya* 'That Thou Art' from a Guru. As soon as he hears the phrase 'That Thou Art', the disciple's attention should turn to know 'What am I?' This is the real aim with which the *Mahavakya* was revealed. The one important word that stands in the above *Mahavakya* to turn the disciple's mind to Self-attention is 'Thou'. Therefore this verse categorically asserts that out of the three words, 'Thou' alone should be taken for scrutiny by a worthy disciple. The following two verses also emphasize the same idea.

507. Only in order to turn inward the minds of less mature aspirants, which will be favourable for the aforesaid enquiry, [the *Vedas*] added the other two words 'That' [*tat*] and 'Art' [*asi*] to the word 'Thou' [*tvam*], thereby forming the *Mahavakya* 'That Thou Art' [*tat tvam asi*]. Thus should you know.

508. Verily the enquiry done within oneself to know the real import denoted by the word 'Thou', 'What is it?'

[‘Who am I?’], is the proper means to know the correct import of the other two words also.

3 Chapter Concerning the Greatness of the *Upanishads*

(Upanisha Matchit Tiran)

509. Grace is the form of God, who has never known ignorance [*ajnana*]. The true knowledge of *Brahman* [*brahma-jnana*] is the dais on which the Lotus Feet of God are placed. The *Upanishads* are the golden sandals of those Feet. For the petty ego [modern man] who is possessed by the madness of scientific knowledge [*vijnana*], the only worthy duty is to hold on his head the *Upanishad*-sandals.

Sadhu Om: The teaching imparted through this verse is that the foremost and immediate duty of the modern mind, which is full of scientific knowledge, is, instead of feeling proud of its petty knowledge, to give up its pride and follow the path of Self-knowledge shown by the *Upanishads*. Since it is a well-known fact that the knowledge of worldly science, though it has developed more and more, has never yet found an end, this verse instructs that, if it wants to achieve a complete knowledge, the human intellect which engages in science, which will never provide anything but an incomplete knowledge, has to take refuge under the mercy of the *Upanishads*, which alone teach Self-knowledge, the final and complete knowledge. This is the only way for it to be saved, and this is its foremost duty.

4 Chapter Concerning *Upasana*

(Upasanait Tiran)

Michael James: *Upasana* means worship, that is, clinging to God through body (by doing *puja*), through speech (by doing *japa* or reciting *stotras*) or through mind (by doing *dhyana*).

510. Those fortunate devotees who have seen the Lotus Feet of God, which shine supremely pure in their heart, will have all their evil and inauspicious tendencies eradicated and will shine with the Light of Knowledge.

511. Devilish qualities [*asura sambat*] will bring only ruin

on you. Knowing this well, develop only divine qualities [*deyva sambat*]. *Upasana*, which will cultivate divine qualities in the heart, alone will save the soul.

Sadhu Om: Here, *upasana* should be understood to mean clinging to Self, that is, attending to Self, which is Self-enquiry. For, Self-enquiry alone bestows all the divine qualities [*deyva sambat*]. The word '*sambat*' means 'that which is earned'. Since all things earned externally will bring only misery to the *jiva*, '*deyva sambat*' alone is worthy to be earned, and is developed solely by Self-enquiry.

512. Though the non-dual knowledge [*advaita jnana*] is difficult to attain, it becomes easy to attain when the true love, *bhakti*, for the Feet of the Lord [Siva] becomes intense, since His Grace, the revealing Light which dispels ignorance, then begins to flow.

513. By firmly fixing with love the Feet of the Lord in the Heart, one can sever the bondage of delusion, and by so cutting the bondage; one can behold the true Light of supreme knowledge, one's Heart-lotus having blossomed.

Michael James: Readers should here remember the teaching of Sri Bhagavan that Self alone is denoted by the terms 'the Feet of God', 'Grace', and so on.

514. If the head of the *jiva* **is fixed at the Feet of Siva, the *jiva* will shine as Siva Himself. Because, the petty ego, losing its nature of moving, remains still in the real state of Self, which is motionless.**

Michael James: The nature of the wave is to move. The nature of the ocean is to remain motionless. If the wandering wave loves the ocean, that is, if it loves the nature of the ocean, namely, to remain still, it will lose its wave-form, subside, drown into the ocean and thereby become the ocean itself, that is, it will become motionless. Likewise, if the *jiva*, the wandering mind, loves Siva, the Self, he will lose his *jiva*-nature, that is, the nature of moving and standing as a separate entity, dissolve in Siva and become Siva Himself.

515. In order to sever the strong, long-standing and false

bondage and be saved, without wasting any time, meditate always with rousing and intense love on the golden Lotus Feet of the Lord.

Sadhu Om: "Ever practise meditation upon Self [atma-dhyana] and achieve the supreme bliss of Liberation," says Sri Bhagavan in the concluding chapter of *Vichara Sangraham*. Thus, we should understand that meditating upon Self is what is recommended in this verse.

516. The true form [nature] of God [Self] cannot be understood except by the mind which stands firmly still in *nishta* [Self-abidance or *samadhi*]. Therefore, without allowing the mind either to wander as a vagabond [i.e. to undergo waking and dream – *sakala*] or to fall into *laya* [i.e. to fall into sleep – *kevala*] due to tiredness, train the mind to be conscious and still on one target [Self].

Michael James: It is indicated in this verse that making the mind still, that is, keeping it unaffected by *sakala* (the state of manyness) and *kevala* (the state of nothingness), is what is called *nishtha* or *samadhi*.

517. Give up all attachments towards the petty sense-objects [*vishayas*], which are caused by the delusion 'I am this fleshy body'. The silent mind [thus stilled by renouncing sense-objects] is the pure *mani-lingam* [superior form of Siva-*lingam*]. If this is adored [i.e. if this mental silence is carefully preserved with great love, which is the real worship of it], it will bestow unending bliss.

518. All days, all planets, all *yogas* and all *orais* are auspicious days, auspicious planets, auspicious *yogas* and auspicious *orais* for an aspirant to do this *upasana* [spiritual practice].

Michael James: *Yogas* and *orais* are particular parts of time in a day, as calculated in astrology.

Sri Muruganar: Since the days, planets, *yogas* and *orais* are within the conception of the mind, some of them may be inauspi-

cious, but only for worldly activities. None of them can do any harm to an aspirant who wants to do Self-attention [*atma-dhyana*], which is the real worship of God, because it is concerned with Self, which is beyond the mind. The ten verses sung by Sri Jnanasambandhar in order to conquer the effects of planets and also some other songs of Tamil saints assure us that none of these time factors can create any obstacle for a devotee who comes under the power of the Grace of God.

519. It is very rare to get full faith in One [God or Guru]. If such a faith blossoms in the heart [due to past merits], do protect and nourish it, since it is similar to a new-born baby, without spoiling it by giving room to any doubts or suspicion, just as, if one possessed the Kamadenu, one would bring it up with great care and love.

Michael James: The Kamadenu is a divine cow which will give one whatever one desires. Likewise, complete faith in God or Guru will bestow anything and everything upon a devotee. Such is the wonderful power of faith.

5 Chapter Concerning *Upasana* through Silence

(Maunopasanait Tiran)

520. Installing the Lord on the heart-throne and fixing the mind uninterruptedly in Self in such a manner that it will become one with It, is the true and natural worship through Silence [*maunopasana*].

521. The pure state of having very great attachment to Self and having no attachment to any other thing is verily one's state of Silence. Learning to remain as 'I am that Silence' and ever abiding as It is, is the true mental worship [*manasika puja*].

Sadhu Om: Nowadays many among us are under the impression that doing mental worship [*manasika puja*] means imagining that one is collecting all the necessary things such as flowers, sandal-paste, fruits, garlands and so on, and that one is offering them to God.

However, this is only a mental activity [*pravritti*]. This verse

teaches us that this is not the correct *manasika puja*, and that Self-abidance, ‘worship through Silence’ [*maunopasana*] mentioned above, alone is the real *manasika puja*.

6 Chapter Concerning the Delusion of Arguments

(Vada Mayal Tiran)

522. Only the ignorant who do not know even a little about the nature of their own [the ego’s] rising and setting will engage themselves in a heated war of words: “Fate is more powerful than free-will [the effort of the mind]”; “No, free-will is more powerful than fate”; “Fate is superior to free-will”; “No, free-will is superior to fate”.

Michael James: Verse 18 of *Ulladu Narpadu* is to be referred to here.

523. Instead of enquiring and knowing through practical experience the truly existing Thing, and thereby attaining the clear state of supreme Silence, some jump up with egoism, having fanaticism for a particular religion and hatred towards other religions, and make vain and noisy arguments and criticisms.

Michael James: Refer to verse 991.

524. The very nature of argument is to veil the truth. Since it is nothing but an art of illusion and imagination, it will delude and confuse the mind. Therefore, no one who has fallen into the dark hole of arguments will see the Sunlight, Self-knowledge.

525. Words [and thoughts] do not reveal Self. On the contrary, they veil it completely. Therefore, be alert in controlling both speech and thought so that Self, which is hidden by them, will shine of Its own accord.

Sri Muruganar: ‘We’, Self, alone are real. Even thoughts [mind] and speech, which is only a gross form of thoughts, are alien to us and therefore unreal. So, the practice of Self-attention, which will subside thoughts and speech, is the worthy undertaking.

526. Do not lend your intellect [*buddhi*] as a slave to the gymnastics of eloquence [in the form of speech and poetry] and to the jugglery of arguments. Know the truth, Self, by turning the pure *sattvic* mind within and thereby destroying the illusion of otherness.

7 Chapter Concerning the Uselessness of Measurements

(Alavai Yavalat Tiran)

527. The measurer, the measure [i.e. the standard or scale of measurement], the measured and the measuring – all these seem to exist and shine because of the shining of existence-consciousness [*sat-chit*] in the heart. What measure is there to measure It [Self, the existence-consciousness]?

Sadhu Om: Everything is measured by the mind, having the imaginary measures [dimensions or standards of measurement] of time and space. Those things which are thus measured [including time and space], the act of measuring them, and the measurer [the mind] – all these seem to have existence only because of and in the presence of Self, the existence-consciousness. Other than this, they have no real existence of their own. Therefore, how can Self be measured by any of these – mind, time, space and so forth?

528. Only so long as the measurer [the mind] exists will the measure and the measured also seem to exist as real. But when the measurer [the mind] sees Self, the really existing Thing, and is thereby lost in It, all other things such as the measure, the measured and the measuring will automatically become unreal.

8 Chapter Concerning Indirect Knowledge

(Paroksha Jnanat Tiran)

529. The fire of desires of the *jivas* will be extinguished only by the direct [*aparoksha*] experience of the pure Self-knowledge, in which all the *vasanas* of the ignorant mind are dead. If the thirst and heat of the physical body could be quenched and cooled by a mirage, then the spiritual thirst [the desire for bliss –

***moksha*] could also be quenched by indirect knowledge [*paroksha jnana*].**

Michael James: *Paroksha jnana* means mediated or indirect knowledge, that is, the knowledge about Self gathered through books (by *sravana* and *manana*) as opposed to immediate or direct knowledge (*aparoksha jnana*), that is, the direct experience of Self (gained through *nididhyasana*).

530. When thus the direct [*aparoksha*] experience of the pure Supreme Self alone is the true, non-dual knowledge [*jnana*], calling even that which is indirect [*paroksha*] as a knowledge [*jnana*] is just like calling demons [*rakshasas*] 'meritorious persons' [*punya janas*].

Michael James: In literature, while referring to an unworthy thing, it is a custom to use a worthy name to ridicule it indirectly. It is in this manner that *rakshasas*, who are well known to be wicked sinners, are sometimes referred to as 'meritorious persons' (*punya janas*). Sri Bhagavan points out in this verse that indirect knowledge (*paroksha jnana*) is termed as a 'knowledge' (*jnana*) only in this spirit, for it is in truth nothing but ignorance (*ajnana*) itself.

531. The supreme *Jnana* [Self-knowledge], which destroys deceptive delusion, will be born only out of a true enquiry in the form of an attention towards that which exists as the Reality ['I am'] in the heart. But know that mere book-knowledge about enquiry, even though learnt from clear scriptures, will be like a picture-gourd drawn on a sheet of paper, which is useless for cooking.

532. Is it possible to appease one's hunger by eating food cooked by a painted picture of a blazing fire? Likewise, an end to the miseries of life and the enjoyment of the bliss of Self cannot be achieved by mere verbal knowledge, but only by the practical knowledge of Self, which is obtained by extinguishing the ego in the heart. Thus should you know.

533. The bliss of the *sphurana* of the Supreme Self cannot be obtained by intellectual arguments, but only by

the knowledge which shines in the heart as the form of the Divine Lord who lends light to the mind.

9 Chapter Concerning the Oneness of *Jiva*

(Eka Jivat Tiran)

534. Let highly mature and courageous aspirants who have a bright and sharp intellect, firmly accept that soul [*jiva*] is only one [*eka*] and thereby be established deep in the heart [by enquiring 'Who am I, that one *jiva*?']. It is only to suit immature minds that scriptures generally say that souls [*jivas*] are many [*nana*].

Sadhu Om:

> If the ego comes into existence, all will come into existence; if the ego does not exist, nothing will exist; [therefore] verily the ego is all. – *Ulladu Narpadu* verse 26.
>
> If 'I' rises, all will rise. – *Who am I?*
>
> If the thought 'I' does not exist, no other thing will exist – *Sri Arunachala Ashtakam*, verse 7.

Since it is clear from the above three *upadesas* of Sri Bhagavan that the rising of the ego, the feeling 'I am so-and-so', alone is the cause for the rising and appearance of the whole universe with innumerable *jivas* living in it, we should conclude without any doubt that it is only in the ignorant outlook of the ego, the one 'I', the one *jiva*, alone, and that, by the destruction of this one 'I', through the enquiry 'Who am I?', the existence of all other *jivas* will come to an end. This is the import of the *upadesa* contained in this verse.

535. Is there anyone who is born, or is there anyone who has cut the bondage of birth [and death]? During the time when the 'I'-thought [the ego] does not rise [that is, in deep sleep], is there anyone who is bound in the body [that is, who identifies with the body] or who is released from it? Enquire well, now, and tell me!

Sadhu Om: In the absence of 'I', the one *jiva*, [either in sleep, where the 'I'-thought has subsided, or in *Jnana*, where it has been

destroyed], no other *jiva* exists, either as a bound one [*bandha*] or as a released one [*mukta*]. The oneness of *jiva* is thus further stressed in this verse.

10 Chapter Concerning Knowledge and Ignorance

(Arivu-ariyamait Tiran)

536. O worldly people who more and more scrutinize one thing after the other and run after each of them thinking that each one is worthier than the other! To scrutinize that one Thing [Self] by scrutinizing which nothing more will remain [to be scrutinized], alone is [true] knowledge.

Sadhu Om: The Tamil word used here is '*nadum*', which may mean either 'scrutinize' or 'desire'. However, it is more fitting here to take it in the sense of 'scrutinize' because in the second half of the verse the Tamil word '*aydal*', which means only 'scrutinize', is used twice. Furthermore, the verse is in the 'Chapter concerning Knowledge and Ignorance'.

537. For those who can scrutinize [enquire into] and know the subtlest thing [Self], what benefit is there by the research on and knowledge of gross objects? Worthier than the research done [by the mind] through the eye and so on, is the indestructible research done within [that is, Self-enquiry or Self-attention].

Sadhu Om: The import of this verse is that Self-enquiry, by which Self is known, is far superior to scientific researches.

538 (a) To know Self clearly, rejecting all alien things [the universe] as mere nothingness [*sunya*] is the supreme knowledge [*jnana*] transcending time and space, other than which there is no worthy [or superior] knowledge.

538 (b) To know Self clearly, rejecting all alien things [the universe] as mere nothingness [*sunya*] is the supreme knowledge [*jnana*]. The knowing of all times and places or the knowing of others' minds is not worthy knowledge.

539. The truth is that any playful sport of *Sakti* [that is, any glory seen in this universe] cannot be other than *Sakta*, Self [the possessor of *Sakti*]. Hence, having the outlook of thinking that the world, which is [in truth mere] consciousness [*chit*], is different from it [consciousness, 'we'] and being deluded [by likes and dislikes for the things in the world], is the false *maya*, which causes wrong [i.e. all obstacles and miseries].

540. The knowledge 'I am the body' is the delusive and destructive ignorance. The correct knowledge [the knowledge of *Brahman*], which is worthy to be attained, is the knowledge that even the aforesaid ignorance, which is false, does not exist apart from Self, the unavoidable reality.

Sadhu Om: Though the snake that appears on a rope is false, it cannot have such an appearance, as if existing, without the existence of the rope. So also, though the ignorance 'I am the body' is a false knowledge, even it cannot appear to exist without the existence of the real Self. The teaching given in this verse is the same as that given in verse 13 of *Ulladu Narpadu*.

541. Just as, on account of mere imagination, the one, unbroken space is called by different names [such as '*ghatakasa*', the whole, all-pervading space], so the one, whole, unbroken Self is seen by the immature people as many [that is, as diverse souls and objects]. This is the result of the wonderful *maya*.

542. To see the one Self, the reality which is devoid of anything false, as many and different is what is ignorance. Therefore, whatever thing appears in whatever name and form, to see it in its real nature [as Self] is what is knowledge.

Sadhu Om: The last two lines of this verse are verse 355 of *Tirukkural*. On reading the Tamil verse of Sri Muruganar, those who know *Tirukkural* can understand how skillfully he has used this verse of *Tirukkural* to explain the idea of Sri Bhagavan.

543. Though the worlds outside are with innumerable dif-

ferences [that is, with different names and forms], the inner reality of all of them is the one Self, just as, though the sesame seeds put into the big whirling oil-expeller are innumerable, the one substance in them is the oil.

544. To know though the real clarity [*chit*] in the state where immense bliss [*ananda*] and the non-dual Self-existence [*sat*] are shining as one, that no such duality as knowing and not knowing has ever existed at all, is the true knowledge.

545. Knowledge and ignorance can exist only pertaining to external, second person objects. But, since they [knowledge and ignorance] do not exist in the real state where Self alone shines, the true knowledge is that one in which the duality of knowledge and ignorance does not exist.

Sadhu Om: Refer to verse 12 of *Ulladu Narpadu* and verse 27 of *Upadesa Undiyar.*

546. Some say, "Know thyself" [but] is there anyone who does not know himself? Tell me, is it not equally ignorant to say "I have realized Self" as to say "I have not realized Self"?

Sadhu Om: It is worth reading verse 33 of *Ulladu Narpadu* here. *Jnanis*, who have gained Self-Knowledge, never say "I have realized my Self" or "I have not realized my Self". Refer to Sri Bhagavan's saying in the 2nd line of the 2nd verse of *Sri Arunachala Ashtakam*, "An 'I' does not rise to say 'I have seen'; how then can an 'I' rise to say 'I have not seen'?" The state in which the ego does not rise is the state beyond knowing and not knowing.

547. If one remains merely as consciousness [that is, as 'I am', in other words, in Self-abidance, *atma-nishtha*], ignorance [which is one of the dyad of ignorance and knowledge] will not exist. Hence, ignorance is false; Self-consciousness alone is real. When correctly known, it is ignorance to say that there is ignorance. Verily, pure consciousness is our nature. Thus should you know.

11 Chapter Concerning Delusion

(Marul Tiran)

548. It is only so long as one thinks 'I know other things' that the delusion 'I do not know myself' will remain. When such a thought is removed by the experience of the ever-existing Self-knowledge, that delusion will become false [that is, will become non-existent].

Sadhu Om: Since whenever anything is known, our power of attention takes the form of a thought [*vritti*] 'I know other things', a false delusion 'I do not know myself' prevails. But when the discrimination [*viveka*] 'Whenever I know any other thing, it is known because I exist there, and hence every knowledge of my own existence is already there' shines more and more through enquiry [*vichara*], the truth 'There is no time in which I do not know myself' will dawn. This is the eternal, ever-attained state of Self-knowledge.

549. Since the nature of Self is the perfect whole, all, and one without another, knowing all other things instead of enquiring within 'What is my real nature?' [in other words, 'Who am I?'] is but mere delusion.

550. In the same manner as a dream appears in the mind-space by mere mental imagination, the scene of this world-picture [as our life] appears in this waking state. Therefore, to abide in Self by firmly knowing thus, by destroying all objective knowledge [the knowledge of second and third persons in this waking state] and by annihilating all the foolish desires for the objective scenes here, alone is worthy.

551. Only those ignorant ones who do not enquire and know Heart, the Supreme Thing, will be frightened and deluded by the deceitful *maya*. But bright *Jnanis*, who have experienced the supreme Self, the ocean of bliss, will not be afraid of it [*maya*].

552. The crazy people who do not know the non-dual Reality [Self], which exists and shines as one, and who with the jaundiced eye of ignorance see Self as many, are just like those who see many mirages in the desert.

Sri Muruganar: Through this verse, Sri Bhagavan indicates that it is certain that those who have the dual outlook will be disappointed and will suffer much in this life.

12 Chapter Concerning Waking and Dream

(Nana Kana Tiran)

553. Those who have the eye of *Jnana* [that is, *Jnanis*] declare that both waking and dream are the same in defectfulness. Because, does not even waking, a state of great attachment, disappear just like dream?

554. All the *karmas* that one has seen that one has done in dream, will not give fruit in the waking state. Likewise, all the *karmas* done in this waking state by the deluded ego-sense will not give fruit in the state of Self-awakening.

Sadhu Om: This verse emphasizes that for a *Jnani*, none of the three *karmas* [*agamya*, *sanchita* or *prarabdha*] remain to be experienced.

555. *Jnanis* say that both dream and waking are the creations of the deluded mind. Because, in both of them, thoughts and names-and-forms exist in the same manner.

Michael James: Refer to *Who am I?* where Sri Bhagavan says, "In both waking and dream, thoughts and names-and-forms [the objects] come into existence simultaneously".

556. When the ego is half blossomed, dream appears. When the ego is fully blossomed, waking, the world-appearance which is the full bloom of ignorance, comes into existence.

Michael James: Refer to verse 10 of *Drik Drisya Viveka*, a work of Sri Adi Sankara which Sri Bhagavan translated into Tamil prose, where it is said, "In deep sleep, where the body remains insentient [*jada*], the ego is completely subsided [in *laya*]. Its half blossoming is dream; its full blossoming is waking".

557. When the experience of the fruits of *karmas* which

had caused the waking state to come to an end, and when the fruits of the *karmas* to be experienced in dream start, the mind, in the same manner as it had taken a body as 'I' in the waking state, will identify and take another body as 'I' in dream.

Michael James: Refer to *Who am I?* where Sri Bhagavan says, "In dream, the mind [merely] assumes another body".

558. If it is asked, '[When the dream-body and the waking-body are thus different,] how does the semen in the waking-body drip out when one sees in dream that the dream-body has contacted a woman?', the answer will be that it is due to the speed of attachment with which one springs from the dream-body to the waking-body.

559. When the dream is thus found to be an appearance caused by the wavering mind, waking is also the same. As true as are the happenings in the waking state, so true are also the happenings in dream during the time of dreaming.

Michael James: Refer to *Who am I?* where Sri Bhagavan says, "To the extent to which all the events which happen in dream appear at that time to be real".

560. The answer 'Waking is long and dream is short' was given as a mere [consoling] reply to the questioner. [In truth, however, no such difference exists, because, since time itself is a mental conception,] the concept of differences in time [such as 'long' and 'short'] appears to be true only because of the deceitful play of *maya*, the mind.

Sadhu Om: Sri Bhagavan refers here to the following answer He gave in *Who am I?*, "Except that waking is long and dream is short, there is no difference [between the two]".

561. The glory of *maya*, the mind, which conceives all things within the range of the false darkness of ignorance and deludes, lies in showing and confusing

one second as an aeon [*kalpa*] and an aeon as a second.

Sadhu Om: Only within a dark room and only by means of a limited light is it possible to project and see a cinema picture. It is impossible to do so in a place where the bright sunlight is shining. Similarly, only within the dark ignorance of forgetfulness of Self and only by means of the mind-light is it possible to project the states of waking and dream and to see world-pictures therein. It is impossible to project and experience waking and dream when [in *jnana-samadhi*] Self shines with all Its splendour. Hence, the instruction contained in this verse is that it is only by means of *maya*, the mind-light, that the differences concerning time and space are seen in waking and dream.

562. By ever attending to Self, a basic existence, the perfect whole, the eye of the light of knowledge, drive away the two dreams [waking and dream] which are experienced by the ego and which are mere illusory imaginations of differences appearing in the darkness [of Self-forgetfulness].

563. If the mind, which is full of ignorant delusion and which sees the worlds in dreams [in the two dreams, that is, in waking and dream] but which does not see its own truth, enquires who it itself is [in other words, 'Who am I?'] and thereby loses its mind-nature, it will then shine as the Sun of true knowledge [*jnana*], remaining at the Feet of the Lord.

564. Rightly knowing Self is just like one, on awakening from a dream, knowing that all the whirl of sufferings experienced in that dream have become false and that one is really the same unaffected one who was previously lying safe on the soft bed.

Sadhu Om: In this verse, only the example [*upamanam*] is clearly described, while the 'exampled' [*upameyam*, that is, what is illustrated by that example], namely the unaffected state of Self, is left to the readers to expand and understand.

The *jiva*, who has forgotten his real nature, is compared to the one who slept on his bed. The sufferings experienced by the

jiva due to the fruits of the *karmas* done during his innumerable births and deaths, which appear and disappear as dreams in the sleep of the aforesaid forgetfulness of Self, are compared to the whirl of sufferings experienced in dream during one's sleep. Then, all the appearances of births and deaths of the *jiva* coming to an end as false through the real awakening as Self, are compared to all the dreams coming to an end as false through one's awakening from sleep. Even though Self, the non-dual one, seems to become a *jiva* and suffer through many births and deaths, in reality Self is unaffected by these false appearances. This is illustrated by the example of a sleeper, who ever remains really the same, unaffected person who was previously lying safe on the soft bed.

Sri Muruganar: When one comes to know through Self-awakening that all the dyads and triads are false, they will all disappear, having no base [no ego] to shine upon. The blissful consciousness which then simply sleeps [or: The consciousness which then simply sleeps blissfully], unassociated with the dyads and triads, is the state of rightly knowing Self.

565. One's attaining liberation after undergoing great sufferings in *samsara* [the mundane state of activity] is just like one's awakening from sleep after seeing, due to illusion, in a dream, oneself losing one's way, wandering in a desert, suffering much and then reaching one's town.

Sri Muruganar: This verse is a subtle indication by Sri Bhagavan that even liberation is a mere mental conception [that is, it is false]. The truth is that the ever-unbound Self alone exists.

B9. Forgetting Self, mistaking the body for Self, taking innumerable births, and at last knowing Self and being Self is just like waking from a dream of wandering all over the world. Know thus.

Michael James: This verse composed by Sri Bhagavan is verse one of *Ekatma Panchakam*.

13 Chapter Concerning the Different States

(Avasta Beda Tiran)

566. If it is possible for the other four elements [namely earth, water, fire and air] to exist really apart from the vast space [the fifth element], then the three states such as waking [namely waking, dream and sleep] can also have a real existence apart from the flawless *turiya* [the state of Self].

Michael James: The instruction is that waking, dream and sleep are unreal.

567. (a) The difference between the first three dense states [waking, dream and sleep] and the fourth and fifth states [*turiya* and *turiyatita*] are [accepted in *sastras*] only for those who are not able to tear away the dark ignorance of sleep and to immerse and abide firmly in the effulgent *turiya* [the state of Self].

567. (b) The difference between the first three dense states and the fourth and fifth states are only for those who are not able to immerse and abide firmly in *turiya*, which shines piercing through the dark ignorance of sleep.

Sadhu Om: The import of this verse is that advanced aspirants should know that all states other than *turiya* which are mentioned in scriptures [i.e. sleep, waking, dream and *turiyatita*] are unreal. In order to understand these two verses, 566 and 567, more clearly, let the reader refer to verse 32 of *Ulladu Narpadu – Anubandha*m and also to the last pages of chapter eight of *The Path of Sri Ramana* – Part One.

568. Only so long as the one who is attached to the states [the *avasta-abhimani*, that is, the one who identifies himself with a body and thereby feels 'I am now in the waking state; I was having dreams'] exists, will the [aforesaid five] different states be known as if existing. But when this attached one [*abhimani*], who has risen in the form of an ego-consciousness, is

lost through Self-enquiry, all the differences that pertain to the states will also end.

Sadhu Om: The Tamil word '*arivay*' may be taken to mean 'know that', instead of 'in the form of an ego-consciousness'.

569. The one [the *Jnani*] who has by supreme devotion [that is, by complete self-surrender] attained the kingdom of the supreme state [*para-avasta*, that is, Self], through his natural supreme state never sees that any state other than that really exists.

Sadhu Om: Just as one big open space becomes three parts when two partition walls are newly erected in the midst of it, so when the two kinds of body-identification, namely the identification with the waking-body and the identification with the dream-body, imaginarily rise, our one unbroken Self-consciousness itself appears to become three states, namely waking, dream and sleep. We who experience and name our original state when the body in waking is identified as 'I', and as the dream state when the body in dream is identified as 'I', also experience and name our original, adjunctless state of pure Self-consciousness, which then remains as if our third state, as sleep.

When the two walls of waking and dream in the form of the two body-identifications are destroyed through Self-enquiry, our unlimited, natural and single Self-consciousness is experienced as the one adjunctless clear state, like the one big open space. Since this is experienced as a new state, completely different from those three states [waking, dream and sleep] experienced till then, it is named by scriptures as 'the fourth' [*turiya*]. But when the knowledge 'This is nothing but our eternal, natural state' dawns through the well-established experience of the natural state of Self [*sahaja atma sthita*] and when waking, dream and sleep are thereby known to be unreal, the name '*turiya*', the fourth, will also become meaningless, since this state will have thus lost its newness. Hence, since this natural, non-dual, eternal Self-consciousness thus cannot be called '*turiya*' [the fourth state]. The scriptures again named it as '*turiyatita*' [the state of transcending *turiya*, the fifth state]! But all these classifications and differences of states are merely verbal, and in reality they do not exist at all. These five kinds of states are classified and told to aspirants during their period of ignorance and

for their mental satisfaction. The *Jnani's* experience is the one mere consciousness of Self-existence, which is beyond all states.

14 Chapter Concerning the Two *Karmas* — Good and Bad

(Iru Vinai Tiran)

570. So long as one thinks 'I, an individual, am existing', it is proper to accept the theory that – on account of egoism, the attachment to the body – one certainly has to do [with a sense of doership] the two kinds of *karma* [good and bad] and to experience their fruits.

Sadhu Om: No one can deny the karma theory – the theory that everyone has to do actions [karmas] and reap [experience] their fruits – so long as there exists doership, which is the very nature of the ego. Refer also to verse 38 of *Ulladu Narpadu* in which Sri Bhagavan says, "Only if we are the doer of actions, will we have to experience the resulting fruit...".

571. God, the Lord of the soul, has appointed the ghost, the ego, as a strange gaoler [or sentry] to protect the body and extend its lifetime until the soul experiences, without missing a bit, all the fruits of *karma* allotted to it in *prarabdha*.

572. It is only the results of one's good and bad actions [*karmas*] done in the past that come in one's present life as one's pleasures and pains, and also as one's friends and mighty foes, who are the instrumental cause for them [one's pleasures and pains].

573. Do not perform any good action [*karma*] through a bad means, thinking 'It is sufficient if it bears good fruit'. Because, if the means is bad, even a good action will turn out to be a bad one. Therefore, even the means of doing good actions should be pure.

Michael James: From this verse, we have to understand that the popular saying 'The end justifies the means' should not be taken as a worthy principle to follow.

574. Those alone are good actions [*karmas*] which are done lovingly and with a peaceful and pure mind. All

those actions which are done with an agitated, desirous and impure mind are to be classed only as evil actions.

15 Chapter Concerning Dyads and Triads

(Irattai Muppudi Tiran)

Michael James: Dyads (*dwandwa* in Sanskrit or *irattai* in Tamil) means the pairs of opposites such as good and bad, pleasure and pain, knowledge and ignorance, and so on. Triads (*triputi* in Sanskrit or *muppudi* in Tamil) means the three factors of objective knowledge such as knower, knowing and thing known, experiencer, experiencing and thing experienced, seer, seeing and thing seen, and so on.

575. The nature of the non-Self is to remain as the base of the imaginary perception of dyads through the senses by the mind, which has slipped down from the real state of Self. There is no room for such dyads [or triads] in Self.

Michael James: The nature of Self is oneness; the nature of the non-Self is to have dyads and triads.

This verse makes clear that the word 'one' (*ondru*) used by Sri Bhagavan in verse 9 of *Ulladu Narpadu*, where He says, "The dyads and triads always depend for their existence upon the one [*ondru*]... ", does not denote Self, but only the ego, which is non-Self. Refer to *The Path of Sri Ramana* – Part Two, appendix 4c.

576. 'This is a thing' – pointing out a limitation thus is the indication that a thing is known. Only because of such an indication [only because such an indication is possible, in other words, only because it is possible to point out a limitation for a thing], does it become possible to define a thing. Thus, a definition of a thing is possible only because that thing is within a limitation. But Self, which transcends all, has no limitation [and hence It cannot be known or defined].

Sadhu Om: Since Self is not, like dyads and triads, an object of knowledge, It cannot be either pointed out within a limit or defined as such-and-such.

577. Since the nature of Self is to shine as one without another, attention to other things is impossible for it. When the nature of the seer [the ego] is sought and seen, 'Who is it that sees all these [dyads and triads]?', the mind-knot will be severed and hence the dyads and triads will cease to exist.

Michael James: Refer to verse 9 of *Ulladu Narpadu.*

578. Accept the ever-shining Self-knowledge to be the only reality. Reject all the triads, deciding them to be an imaginary dream.

579. Since Self is the eternal, non-dual Thing and since there is no means to reach It other than Self-attention, know that Self itself is the path, Self itself is the goal, and that they [the path and the goal] are not different.

Sadhu Om: The Sages' saying, "I am the path and I am the goal", is to be recalled here.

580. When the delusive mind which sees differences drowns and dies in the state of Self, the one existence-consciousness [*sat-chit*], all the delusive differences will also turn out to be nothing but the consciousness [*chit*] of *Brahman* [Self], the existence [*sat*].

581. Those who know the alien five sense-knowledges say that knowledges are of different kinds. They are ignorant people who cannot rid themselves of the delusion of differences. When the firm true knowledge is obtained by learning how to withdraw the mind from the five senses, which cause the madness [of desire, fear, and so on], the differences will cease to exist.

16 Chapter Concerning the Enjoyment of Sense-pleasures

(Vidaya Bhaga Tiran)

582. The Sage Dadhyangatharvana, who had experienced [the bliss of] Self, once said, “The pleasure that Indra enjoys with his wife, Ayirani, is not better than the pleasure enjoyed by a dog with its bitch”.

Sri Muruganar: Indra, the king of the heavens, was proudly thinking that the pleasures he enjoyed in heaven were the highest of all. Dadhyangatharvana, a great Sage, once advised Indra as above so that the latter might gain desirelessness [*vairagya*].

583. For a ravenous hunger, even a gruel of broken rice or a porridge of wild-rice flour will be the most delicious food. [Therefore,] in this world, the cause of pleasure lies not in the nature of the sense-objects, but only in the intensity of desire for it.

Sadhu Om: The idea is well explained in *The Path of Sri Ramana* – Part One, chapter two.

584. That which exists [*sat*] itself is consciousness [*chit*]. The consciousness itself is bliss [*ananda*]. Deriving pleasure from other things is mere delusion [that is, the pleasure we suppose we derive from other things is illusory, false]. Tell me, except in the clear and real Self-existence, can there be real happiness in the imaginary sense-objects?

585. A foolish dog crunchingly munching a dry bone with its teeth, making its mouth bleed with wounds and enjoying its own blood, praises, “Nothing will be as tasty as this bone”.

Sadhu Om: Just like the dog which does not know that the blood it tastes is coming only from its own mouth, ignorant people who do not know that happiness comes only from their own Self, seek and amass sense-objects, thinking that happiness comes from them. Refer also to *The Path of Sri Ramana* – Part One, chapter two [first edition, pages 20 to 21; second edition, page 39].

586. Those interested in arguments [the mere scholars of

scriptures], who have not experienced the happiness of consciousness [the bliss of Self], who value only the pleasures – which are other than Self – derived from objects such as women, and who are confused, will finally perish longing for them [the sense-pleasures] even at the time of death.

587. The minds of ignorant people, having forgotten the divine life which is flourishing in the heart and which [alone] is worthy of being known and enjoyed, will meltingly long for the taste of sense-pleasures, which are insignificant fragments.

588. Mean-minded people, being objects of ridicule, will dip only into the pit, the filthy spring of sex; they will never reject it and lovingly take a bath, drowning in the ocean of the supreme bliss of Siva.

589. For those aspirants who have great and intense eagerness to enjoy the ripe fruit of unlimited supreme bliss, the sense-pleasures, which are worthy to be liked and enjoyed only by blind people [people blinded by ignorance] who do not know how to save themselves from ruin, are the lowest and fit only for rejection.

590. When one indeed exists as food [that is, as the contentment which is experienced while eating], not knowing this, if one thinks that one eats food [in order to obtain contentment, and thereby develops the desire to eat more and more], the food [the desire for food] will consume one and make one a slave to an insatiable, great hunger [that is, to an insatiable, great discontentment].

Sadhu Om: Here the word 'food' [*annam*] denotes not only the food taken in through the mouth [and tasted through the tongue], but also all the other four sense-pleasures taken in through the eyes, ears, nose and skin. We think that the food gives us substantial existence, whereas truly we ourself are the substance [*vastu*] or existence [*sat*]. We do not know that our very nature is existence [*Sat*]. Since we are happiness or contentment itself, it is foolish for us to expect to derive contentment from food [sense-objects]. If we,

the existence [*sat*], the fullness of contentment [*ananda*], desire to obtain sense-objects for our contentment, our nature of fullness of contentment is made by that desire into a nature of deficiency; thus it [the desire] swallows us [kills us] by creating an insatiable fire of desire.

591. Those who do not know that, whenever they eat, the food itself is eating away their life, thinking that they are eating the enjoyments [*bhogas*], crave for and run after them.

Sadhu Om: Since food and similar objects of enjoyment make the *jivas* crave for them more and more as they are enjoyed more and more, they take the *jivas* far away from the desire for Self. Since death is nothing but being separated from life [in other words, being separated from Self], food and other objects of enjoyment, which separate us from Self, are here said to be eating away our life or killing us [the *jivas*] as we enjoy them more and more.

592. Just as by [feeding it with] *ghee*, a fire will blaze forth and will not be extinguished, so by satisfying desires, the fire of desire will never subside.

Michael James: The word here in Tamil is *'kama'*, which denotes desire in general and lust in particular.

Verse form:

Not put out, with flaming wrath
The flame by ghee just blazes forth;
The fire of desire ne'er subsides
As more and more 'tis satisfied.

593. "Oh, is it only by touch [or bite]?" On scrutiny, [the answer will be], "No, even by sight or mere thought of it, the snake of the five-sense-desires kills the soul!" Hence, we have never seen a more poisonous snake then sense-desire.

17 Chapter Concerning Mind, the *Maya*

(Mana Mayai Tiran)

594. *Maya* proudly smiles over her own victory in completely deluding even the most intelligent people in

such a way that they feel that that which is in truth unreal [namely the ego, world and so on] is the only reality.

Sadhu Om: It is the play of *maya* which makes one feel 'I am so-and-so' [I am a *jiva*, an individual soul], when in fact the ego is non-existent. Even those who are well learned and who have a sharp intellect, thinking that they are the body [that is, that they are individual souls], crave to acquire occult powers [*siddhis*] and to perform miracles, and thereby to gain glory for themselves, the so-called individuals. Therefore, Sri Bhagavan points out that *maya* has deluded, conquered and brought even them under her mighty, vicious sway.

595. When the light of Self-knowledge ['I am'] is experienced within, what will it matter if a flood of darkness [the appearance of the world] prevails outside? That dense darkness can never veil the Self-light ['I am'].

Sadhu Om: However long, dark and dense is a person's shadow on the ground, it cannot veil the sun in the sky. Similarly, however innumerable are the worlds outside, which come into existence only because of the Self-existence, their apparent existence cannot veil the Self-existence, 'I am'.

596. To say that the destructible, non-existent [*asat*] and insentient [*jada*] *maya* had once bound under its sway Self, the Light of knowledge [which is the only *sat* and only *chit*, that is, the only real, sentient and indestructible Thing], is more foolish and ridiculous than to say that a small mosquito had swallowed the vast sky and then vomited it.

Sadhu Om: The Sanksrit word *'Maya'* means 'that which is not' (*ya* = what; *ma* = is not).

597. When it is established [by the experience of the Sages and by the words of the scriptures] that Heart [Self], the form of perfect knowledge [*jnana*], is the only existing and real Thing, is not this [so-called] great *maya* a mere myth? Then how strange is the

opinion [held by some] that Self [or *Brahman*] is deluded by the bite of this serpent, the mind-*maya*!

Sadhu Om: Since it is well established from all that has been said in the above stanzas that *'maya'* is non-existent, is it not clear that the five functions [*pancha-krityas*], namely creation, sustenance, destruction, veiling and Grace, which are said to be the play of *maya*, are unreal and that *ajata* is the only correct conclusion [*siddhant*]?

18 Chapter Concerning Ignorance

(Pedaimai Tiran)

598. Ignorant people who identify the body as 'I', seeing *Jnanis* who experience *Brahman* as 'I', remark, as if defining the supreme state of *Jnana*, "See, if these people are in the state of *advaita*, how then do they take food, do activities and so on?" Saying thus, they expose their own ignorance – that of mistaking the insentient body for 'I'.

Sadhu Om: Since ignorant people experience only the feeling 'I am the body', they can only see even *Jnanis*, who on the contrary experience the Supreme Self to be 'I', as mere bodies. This is in accordance with the rule 'As is the eye [the seer], so is the sight [the thing seen]'. Refer to verse 4 of *Ulladu Narpadu*, "Can the sight be otherwise than the eye?". Hence, Sri Bhagavan ridicules such ignorant people who talk, taking the activities of the body, the non-Self, to be the activities of the *Jnani*, the Self, and says that they are thereby exposing their own ignorance – the ignorance of taking the body to be Self.

599. A girl who has not attained the age of puberty feels very happy, thinking the grandeur of the celebration of her marriage to be conjugal union. Likewise, the learned who have not enquired within and known Self, feel very proud and happy about the verbal *Vedanta* they prattle, thinking it to be the non-dual knowledge [*advaita jnana*].

Michael James: The simile used in this verse refers to the ancient custom of child marriage.

600. Those who have learnt the supreme science of Self [*atma-para-tattva*] only by reading and hearing from scriptures, who rate themselves very highly because of their power of intellect, yet who have not tested themselves [enquired into themselves], the knowers of the scriptures, thereby losing their individuality and drowning in bliss, test [with the yardstick of their scriptural knowledge] *Jnanis*, who are in Silence. Oh tell me, what a great foolishness is this!

601. Those who do not have the ability to know even their own Self, yet make great efforts [through *tapas*, *yoga*, scientific or historical research, astrology and so on] to know how was the past and how will be the future, are just like a small child who jumps to catch its own shadow.

Michael James: How was the past and how will be the future? That is, how was the world in the past and how will it be in the future, who were we in our past lives and who will we be in our future lives, what will be our future in this present life, and so on and so forth?

602. Those who, because of the faltering of their mind, cannot know the state in which they are at present, meditate deeply in order to find out their state in their distant past and distant future.

603. Those who do not have even the least liking to know 'How are we today?' ['What is our true existence today?'], think and worry much about their truth [their condition] before their present birth and after their death. How strange is their attitude!

604. "Is it by Siva's entering there that the mind [*chittam*] becomes pure, or by the purification of the mind that Siva enters there?" Since those who ask thus are so ignorant as to take the one, non-different action as two different ones, we have no answer to give them.

Sadhu Om: Is it not clear that those who ask this question think that Siva's entering the *chittam* and the purification of the *chittam* are two different actions? Unless they really are two different

actions, we cannot say that one is the cause and the other is the effect. In truth, however, they are not two but one and the same. In other words, the pure condition of the *chittam* is itself Siva, and Siva is nothing but the pure *chittam*, that is, *chit* [refer to verses 70 and 244]. Because the question is thus based upon a false premise, it cannot be considered to be a meaningful question, and hence no meaningful answer for it can be given. That is why Sri Bhagavan says, “We have no answer to give them”.

19 Chapter Concerning Immaturity

(Apakva Tiran)

605. Why do these people of immature mind, who are melting and weeping with the longing to obtain easily the five sense-pleasures, come and associate with *Sadhus*, who always live the aim of conquering and completely destroying the five sense-pleasures?

Sadhu Om* and *Michael James: Do not people who, even though they may hold degrees or high and powerful positions in society, are immature, approach *Sadhus* with worldly offerings and wait in their holy presence for the fulfilment of their desires? This is not only foolish, but also improper. Since such worldly people are mad after the five sense-pleasures, whereas *Sadhus* are totally destroying the desire for the five sense-pleasures by the power of their *tapas*, they have no business with *Sadhus*. The following incident will throw more light on this point:

One evening at 4 pm during Sri Bhagavan’s stay at Virupaksha Cave, an old *brahmin* came there with his daughter and offered a big plateful of costly sweets. Sri Bhagavan accepted a little of it, and the rest was distributed to all the devotees present, who were immensely happy since in those days they were not getting even enough ordinary food to satisfy their needs. The devotees were very happy, but Sri Bhagavan did not seem to be so pleased. On the third day when she came with her usual plate, though all the devotees were very happy, Sri Bhagavan told her with a look of displeasure, “What is this? Why do you bring today also? I did not mind when you brought it once or twice, but why do you daily bring such costly things? If there is any expectation behind these offerings, it is wrong. This is not the place for the ful-

filment of worldly desires. If you have any such desire, do not bring these offerings from tomorrow onwards".

Next day, to the great disappointment of many of the devotees, she did not come. One of the devotees afterwards enquired from her father and came to know that, in spite of having passed the normal age, the girl had not yet attained maturity for her marriage, and that someone had advised her father that if such offerings were made to Sri Bhagavan, their desire would be fulfilled.

20 Chapter Concerning *Pramada*

(Pramada Tiran)

Michael James: *Pramada* means inadvertence, that is, giving up an action that has been started. In the spiritual path, it means non-vigilance in Self-attention, in other words, slipping down from Self-abidance.

606. The *jiva* called *vyavaharika* [the soul in the waking state] who comes into being [due to *pramada*] from the wonderful, naturally existing state of Self-consciousness, who remains in the waking state experiencing the results of his own good and bad actions [*karmas*], and who subsides, is also a *swapnakalpita* [a soul in dream].

Michael James: This verse would fit well in the chapter concerning the oneness of *jiva* (*Eka Jiva Tiran* – Part Two, chapter 9). To connect it to this present chapter heading, however, the words 'due to *pramada*' are added in brackets.

In scriptures, the soul (*jiva*) is described as having three forms, namely (1) *kutastha* (the soul existing in sleep), (2) *vyavaharika* (the soul existing in the waking state) and (3) *swapnakalpita* (the soul imagined in the dream state), which are given importance according to their reality. According to scriptures, *kutastha* is more real than *vyavaharika*, and *vyavaharika* is more real than *swapnakalpita*, since *swapnakalpita* is an imaginary being, that is, he is the one who, through imagination, comes into existence in dream. But in this verse Sri Bhagavan declares that not only *swapnakalpita*, but even *vyavaharika*, is imaginary, that *vyavaharika* therefore has no greater reality than *swapnakalpita*, and that *vyavaharika* is merely another kind of *swapnakalpita*, because *vyavharika's*

reality is the same as the reality of the world in which he lives and acts. Since this world in the waking state is also nothing but an imaginary, dream-like thing, Sri Bhagavan declares that even *vyavaharika* is a *swapnakalpita*.

607. Because they have slipped down from the fearless state of Self, the souls, feeling themselves to be low and mean, undergo the sufferings of birth [and death]. "People who slip down from their status are like a hair which has dropped down from the head".

Sadhu Om: In Tamil, the last two lines of this verse, given here within quotation marks, are verse 964 of *Tirukkural*. Because of the chapter heading, namely 'Family Prestige', under which this verse appears in the *Tirukkural*, it is interpreted to mean that if one of high birth behaves unbecomingly, he will immediately lose all his worth, like a hair that has fallen from the head. However, by adding two more lines at the beginning of this verse of the *Tirukkural*, Sri Muruganar has given it a much deeper import, namely that by falling from the state of Self [in other words, by rising as a *jiva*] we lose our true glory and become a mean and worthless creature.

608. Instead of knowing the state of Self, which is eternally clear like a mountain in an open plain, and abiding firmly in it, one who wanders away [as a *jiva*] is like one [the tenth man] who counts only the other nine people and forgets to count himself.

Michael James: Refer to the story of the tenth man, given in *Maharshi's Gospel*, Book Two, chapter one.

609. Instead of keenly enquiring 'Who am I?' within the Heart – the rising place of thought, where the divine Thing, Siva, shines devoid of thought – and knowing It [the divine Thing], merging into It and becoming one with It as 'I am That', it is foolish to slip down from the Self.

610. If we always remain as the perfect and foremost Thing [Self], the Great, how can degradation be caused by others [since there are no others in the state of Self-perfection]? "People who slip down

from their status are like a hair which has dropped down from the head.”

Michael James: That is to say, only when one slips down from Self does one become a mean and degraded *jiva*, just as the hair loses its worth only when it falls from the head.

611. One who – believing the mental objects, which appear in front of him on account of delusion, to be real – slips down from Self [that is, gives up abiding as Self], the wondrous, foremost and pure knowledge, is a mad fool.

612. Undeluded by whatever [dyads and triads] appear or disappear in front of you, always unwinkingly attend to Self. For, even if the non-vigilance [*pramada*] that disturbs Self-attention is very small, that evil that results from it will be very great.

Sri Muruganar: To be ever attentively awakened in one’s own state, Self, without being glamoured by the appearance of any kinds of dyads and triads, is *Jnana-samadhi*. That is Liberation too. If, on the other hand, one forgets Self, the consciousness, and thinks even in the least that there are objects to be known, that *pramada* – no matter how slight it may be – itself will cause great evil, just as even a little drop of poison will do great harm.

21 Chapter Concerning *Samsara*

(Samsara Tiran)

Michael James: *Samsara* literally means ‘that which is well moving’, and denotes the ego’s state of mundane activity, in which it undergoes innumerable births and deaths.

613. The impure mind, which functions as thinking and forgetting, itself is *samsara*, the sequence of births and deaths. The pure Self-consciousness in which the thinking and forgetting mind is dead, itself is the perfect liberation [*mukti*], devoid of birth and death.

Sri Muruganar: The rising of thought (the rising of the first thought, ‘I am so-and-so’) itself is birth, and the forgetfulness of Self itself is death. The mind’s phenomena of such thinking and forgetting is

called *samsara*. When the mind, freed from its impure state of thinking and forgetting, stands ever holding on to Self, that is called the destruction of the mind [*mano-nasa*], which itself is liberation.

614. The big, delusive *samsara* is [nothing but] the mind which leaves its true nature of shining as existence [Self], which mistakes the fleshy body to be Itself, and which is thereby filled with the dense darkness of ignorance and through that deluded outlook sees the sense-objects as if real, like the blueness in the sky.

615. In truth, no thing exists except Self. Yet, forsaking the immense, non-dual bliss of immortality, the inner delusion, the thought 'I am the body' [which is the form of *chit-jada-granthi*, the knot between the sentient Self and the insentient body], undergoes the sequence of births and deaths [known as *samsara*].

616. One's own *chittam* [the storehouse of tendencies, *vasanas*] itself is *samsara*. Though those [the *jivan-muktas*] who live without *samsara* [that is, without *chittam* and its *vasanas*] are [apparently] sometimes, due to body-*karma* [*prarabdha karma*] in *samsara* [that is, involved in mundane activities], they are truly ever strolling in the space of true knowledge [*mey-jnana*].

22 Chapter Concerning Obstacles

(Pratibandha Tiran)

617. The many afflictions which occur with severity like thunderbolts in the life of great devotees are only to establish their pure mind more and more firmly [in *tapas*, that is, in Self-abidance] and not to shake them down [from it].

618. Discriminating and knowing well that all the sufferings that come by *prarabdha* in his life are sent to him by God's Grace in order to make his mind stronger and thereby save him, let an aspirant bear with them patiently as *tapas* without being alarmed even in the least.

619. Just as a gem taken from the mine will not have full lustre if it is not polished on the grindstone, so the real *tapas*, the *sadhana* which one is doing, will not shine well if it is not provided with trials and tribulations on its way.

620. For a big temple-chariot to go along the streets and safely reach its destination, not only the strong linchpins but also the obstructing blocks, which prevent it from dashing into anything by running to the sides of the streets, are indispensable.

Sri Muruganar and Sadhu Om: In the whole of this verse, only an example [*upamana*] is given and the 'exampled' [*upameya*] is left to the reader to infer. It should be understood as follows: 'Similarly, for an aspirant to successfully complete his *tapas* or *sadhana*, not only a blemishless character and mode of life but also the obstacles that come through *prarabdha* are indispensable. Hence, an aspirant should accept obstacles patiently, viewing them as being due to Grace'. For instance, the harsh words, "Why all these for one who is like this?", uttered by the elder brother of young Venkataraman, when patiently accepted, brought forth one great Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi to the world. Not only by unintentional words like these, but even by the intentional troubles caused by wicked people, will great good result in the life of an aspirant.

23 Chapter Concerning the Wonder of *Maya*

(Maya Vichitra Tiran)

621. Though that which ever exists is truly only one [namely Self] and though Its nature is non-becoming, what a wonder it is that It appears to have become many *jivas*, to be doing many good and bad *karmas* and reaping their results, and thereby, from time immemorial till now, to be taking in four ways innumerable births of the seven types, and finally to succeed in attaining Liberation.

Sadhu Om: The four ways of taking birth are through seeds, perspiration, eggs and womb, and the seven types of birth are the *devas*, human beings, beasts, birds, legless creatures, creatures living in water, and plants.

622. When rightly considered, nothing will be more wonderful and laughable than one's toiling very much through some *sadhana* to attain Self in the same manner as one toils to attain other objects, even though one really ever remains as the non-dual Self.

24 Chapter Concerning the Evil of Fame

(Puhazhchi Navai Tiran)

Michael James: The Tamil word *'puhazhchi'* means both fame and praise.

623. Because it brings one under the great evil of yielding to non-vigilance [*pramada*], through which one is made to think that one is worthless and mean body, while in fact one is the supreme *Brahman*, fame [or praise] is to be rejected with great contempt and is not at all to be aspired for by wise people.

Sadhu Om: Is not the *jiva* [the ego], who has a name and form as 'I am so-and-so', the one who gains fame or receives praise? Therefore, it is possible to aspire for fame or praise only when we take upon ourselves the state of an ego, a wretched and downtrodden state caused by *pramada*. Hence, it is advised that those wise people who aspire for Self-knowledge should necessarily reject the possibility of gaining name and fame. It is highly improper for such aspirants [*mumukshus*] to run madly after name and fame. Verse 263 of *Tirukkural* states: "Be born to live with fame; for those who do not achieve fame, it is better not be born". Tiruvalluvar [the author of *Tirukkural*] has rightly said that fame is essential only for those who want to be born as a *jiva* [as an ego]. But since *mumukshus* are those who do not like to be born, but who like only to put an end to their *jiva*-hood and to realize Self, the fame which was recommended by Tiruvalluvar is an obstacle and a great evil for them. That is why Sri Bhagavan says that it should be rejected with contempt by wise people.

624. By exposing oneself due to the desire of being praised by others, one is unnecessarily removing one's protection and creating obstacles to the *sadhana* one has undertaken.

Sadhu Om: The desire for the annihilation of the ego is the right sign of *atma-sadhana*. But fame and praise are things to be gained only by the ego. Therefore, if one has a desire for fame it means that one does not like to destroy the ego. That is why Sri Bhagavan says that the one who has desire for fame is himself creating obstacles to his *sadhana*. Therefore, if the *atma-sadhana* is to progress unobstructed and well protected, it is better for an aspirant to live a life of unknown name and unknown place.

25 Chapter Concerning the Evil of Arrogance

(Anava Navai Tiran)

625. To be subject to arrogance, the reign of hell, is the great, unacceptable wrong. Who but worthless people will fail to hate the face of that *kalipurusha* [that evil, arrogance], which should never be seen by good people?

626. To come and sit with straight back and neck [as if great yogis] in the holy presence of *Jnanis*, who are in Self-abidance [*atma-nishtha*], but [then] yawning, sleeping and snoring – this habit of worldly people is highly improper and bad.

Sri Muruganar and Sadhu Om: It is indeed true that such incidents as described in this verse actually used to happen in the presence of Sri Bhagavan. This verse deals with the improper and arrogant behaviour of some worldly minded people who come to the presence of *Jivan-muktas* and pretend to be great *yogis*. The holy presence of *Jnanis* like Sri Bhagavan Ramana is very rare on earth. Therefore, on such rare occasions when it is available, instead of using it to eradicate our sleep of ignorance [*ajnana*], pretending to be in *yoga* but actually yawning, sleeping and snoring due to *tamas* is highly improper on the part of people.

26 Chapter Concerning the Birth of Misery

(Dukha Utpatti Tiran)

627. Though the nature of Self ever exists as bliss, one is scorched by the burning sun-heat of the misery of birth [and death] solely on account of the rising of

the ego and its functioning mischievously with the madness of dense delusion.

628. The ego, the vile attachment to the body [as 'I am this'], is the base of all demonic qualities [*asura sampat*]. For those whose illusory ego [*maya-ahankara*] is waxing through contact with the binding 'mine'-ness [*mamakara*], it is indeed impossible to achieve peace.

27 Chapter Concerning the Soul

(Jiva Bodha Tiran)

629. The petty soul's wandering [through the five senses], his suffering in the world, his again turning his attention within and his resting peacefully in the heart for a while, is just like one's wandering in the hot sun, one's coming back to the cool shade of a tree and the subsiding of one's heat [for a while].

630. The discriminative person [*viveki*], having once suffered in the hot sunshine, will not like to go again into the sunshine from the shade. Likewise, those who have suffered in the three-fold heat [of desire for wealth, women and fame] which scorches this world, should not again turn worldwards, leaving the Heart [Self].

Michael James: Refer to *Who am I?* where the simile of wandering in the scorching heat of the sun, which is used in the above two verses, is given by Sri Bhagavan.

631. The embodied souls *[jivas],* who have [apparently] risen from the Real Thing [Self or *Brahman*], cannot, until they merge into the Real Thing [their source], stand [or stop] anywhere in spite of any amount [or kind] of obstacles [in the form of pains and pleasures, that is, they cannot stop making efforts, either resting contented with any amount of pleasures or being dejected with any amount of pains experienced in innumerable births of any kind in any world], just as a bird which flies into the vast sky from the

ground cannot stand anywhere else until it returns to earth.

632. When the souls [by enquiring 'Whence am I?' or 'Who am I?'] turn and go back to their source along the way they came, since they then merge into their own Self and since the bliss of Self is so clearly experienced there by them, they stand still, being well established for ever in Self.

Sadhu Om: Verses 631 and 632 convey the same ideas expressed by Sri Bhagavan in verse 8 of *Sri Arunachala Ashtakam*. Refer also to the first seven pages of chapter two of *The Path of Sri Ramana*, Part Two, where the same idea is elaborately explained.

633. Instead of being saved by the Grace of God by thinking of it [the Grace] without thinking [that is, by remaining quiet with the consciousness 'I am'], who can and how to do anything by rising as 'I am so-and-so'? Therefore, by attending to Self and thereby not allowing the ghostly ego to rise and attend to other things, remain in the supreme Silence, where you are That.

28 Chapter Concerning the Powerlessness of the Soul

Jiva Asakta Tiran)

634. Except by the pure light of God's Grace, no one living in this world of ignorance, will be able to enjoy the bliss of the supreme *Jnana*, Self, which shines even through the darkness of delusion [that is, which shines as the light of knowledge enabling one to know even the existence of the darkness or ignorance].

Michael James: Refer also to verse 648.

29 Chapter Concerning the Truth of the Objects Seen

(Drisya Unmai Tiran)

635. When one who does not see the truth himself, the seer, who is indispensable for seeing, sees the world

as true, the world which is seen by him itself ridicules him and laughs at him within itself, bringing shame on him.

Sadhu Om: This verse, which declares that the world laughs within itself and ridicules the one who sees it as real, has a unique beauty. We may wonder how an insentient thing called ‘world’ can laugh. That is the beauty of this verse. We should understand this verse having in mind the idea taught in verse 74 of this work. Will not an unchaste and base-natured prostitute laugh within herself when she hears the appreciating words of her infatuated new lover, who says to his friend, “Oh, this woman, my lover, is the most chaste woman in the world”. Likewise, the world laughs within itself at those who think that it is real. Thus this verse personifies the world nicely. Sri Bhagavan gives more emphasis to the fact that the world is unreal by exposing in this verse that the support or evidence of no other is needed to prove the unreality of the world, for the world itself knows that it is unreal. This is the climax of the fun in this verse.

This verse contains the same instruction given by Sri Bhagavan in *Maharshi’s Gospel*, Book Two, chapter three [8th edition, page 63], “Well then, that world, which you say is real, is really mocking at you for seeking to prove its reality while of your own reality you are ignorant”.

636. Only those which come within the range of light, and not those which are beyond the range of light, can [be known to] exist. Likewise, only those things [the universe] which come within the range of the mind [the reflected light of Self], whose function is thinking and forgetting, are known to have existence.

Michael James: The world cannot appear where the mind-light is absent. That is to say, in the true light of Self the universe, which consists of objects that are created (by thinking), sustained (by continuing to think) and destroyed (by forgetting), does not at all exist. On the other hand, since Self (or God), the truly existing Thing, is beyond the range of mind-light, to the mind It is non-existent. The reason why Self is said to be beyond the range of mind-light, whose function is thinking and forgetting, is that It is a

Thing which can neither be thought of nor forgotten, and which can Itself neither think nor forget.

637. When a thing is known in front [of you], it only establishes that something exists, but does not establish that the form which is made to appear by the contact of the senses with it, is the reality or true nature of that thing.

Michael James: The name-and-form of a thing which we know is created only by the contact of the five senses with that thing. Since name-and-form is a mere imagination of the mind, the true nature of anything we know in the world (or as the world) is in fact nothing but Self.

638. If, instead of seeing anything in front [of you] by the mind, you see by the mind the one who sees, all will be found to be oneself, the seer; then all objective knowledges will be found to be foolish.

639. If the seer [*drik*, the ego] and the seen [*drisya*, the world] were different in their reality [*sat*], the act of seeing would never be possible. But since seeing is possible, know that they [the seer and the seen] have one and the same reality.

Sadhu Om: If we now view verse 636 through the eye of the idea given in this verse, we will understand clearly that the reason why it was said there that only those things which come within the range of the mind are known to have existence, is that 'seeing' is possible only when the seer and the seen are on the same plane of reality [*sat*].

In this verse we are taught a unique idea! Do not many of us say, "It is easy to see other things since they are different from us, the seer, but it is difficult for us to see Self since It is not different from us?" However, if we scrutinize the matter in accordance with this verse, we will find that the law of nature about the seer, seen and seeing is quite contrary to this. It is indirectly but firmly instructed here that to know Self is the easiest, because the reality [*sat*] of the seer [the ego] is in truth Self, the one reality, which we want to see or know.

We should also consider here the fact that the seeing of a dream is possible only because all the objects seen in that dream have the same reality [*sat*] as that of the dreamer who sees the dream.

One more point is also to be understood here. Since the reality or nature of the knower, the ego is the same as the reality or nature of all the objects known [not only of all the objects known through the eyes, that is, the objects seen, but also of all the objects known through the other four senses, that is, the objects heard, smelt, tasted and touched], a thing as world is known to be existing, which is nothing other than the knowledge obtained through the five senses. And since, because it rises and sets, the nature of the ego is false, the world of names and forms, which also has the nature of rising and setting, is also said to be false. But when the real nature of the ego, which lives only by feeding upon the names and forms, which rise and set, is scrutinized [enquired into] and found to be Self or *Brahman*, the true reality [*sat*], which does not have the false nature of rising and setting, then the reality of the world will also be found to be Self. Refer here to verse 4 of *Ulladu Narpadu*, where Sri Bhagavan asks, "Can the seen be otherwise than the eye (the seer)?". Only then will the absolute truth, namely that even the world is real – that it is *Brahman* itself – be properly understood [refer here to verses 50 and 52 of this work]. Till then, it is indispensable [and since it will help one to reach the absolute reality, it is also highly recommendable] for the aspirants to take the reality [*sat*] of the seer, the ego, to be unreal or *asat*, and also to conclude that, since the world has the same reality [*sat*] as the seer, it is unreal.

30 Chapter Concerning Objective Attention

(Suttu Unarvu Tiran)

640. Since the divine bliss is such that it will shine of its own accord if one simply remains still [remains as one's own existence-consciousness], instead of enquiring into oneself and knowing that one is really nothing but the supreme Self, which is devoid of coming and going, and thereby enjoying that bliss, it is, alas, a pity that one unnecessarily wanders [attending to second and third persons, that is, that one

unnecessarily toils much in the paths of *puja*, *dhyana* and so on].

Michael James: In this verse, it is said in a ridiculing manner that it is futile to toil and wander in order to obtain bliss, which will be ever available if we simply keep still, doing nothing!

This verse may also be interpreted to have a second meaning as follows: “For the bliss which will shine even when one remains still, wandering in [the *sadhana* of] proudly knowing oneself as the great Self, which has no coming, is to attain that bliss”. However, since this second meaning is not a coherent sentence and since the reasoning in it is not consistent, it is not a fitting meaning. Moreover, when the later verses in this chapter are read, it is clear that the aim of this chapter is to expose the futility of objective attention (that is, to expose that Self cannot be attained by attention to second and third person objects), and hence only the first meaning given above will be found to be fitting.

641. Even though in truth one ever remains as Self, one’s efforts to seek Self as if one were something else and to attain Self, is to subside finally by knowing that the Self [‘I’] shining in anyone, though it now seems to be different from oneself, is not different from oneself.

642. One’s thinking that Self, which [in reality] is not other than oneself, is other and toiling very much to attain It through one’s own effort [through *sadhanas*], is just like one’s running after one’s own shadow to catch it.

643. Since existence itself is clearly shining as the consciousness ‘I-I’ in the heart, that reality, the unfalse eye [or knowledge], and not those objects [*vishayas*] seen by the physical eye, alone is *sakshat* [what is seen directly]. Therefore, seek and know that.

644. Those who do not keenly attend to and know the existence-consciousness which shines ever-unsetting in the heart, fall into *maya* through the objective attention caused by the ego, which rises and attacks with dense delusion.

31 Chapter Concerning the Severance of Objective Attention

(Suttu Aruttal Tiran)

645. The real intention of the scriptures in saying "Know the truth of thyself", is nothing but to make one give up the objective attention, the false knowledge. Why? Because, the truth of oneself ever shines in everyone as 'I am', like the sun.

Michael James: Since the truth of oneself is ever shining in everyone as 'I am', it is not a thing to be known anew. Therefore, when the scriptures say "Know the truth of thyself", their real intention is simply to make us turn our attention towards the ever-known 'I am', thereby giving up the attention towards second and third person objects, for such objective attention alone is wrong knowledge or *ajnana*. Thus, the intention of the scriptures is not to make us know anything new, but only to make us give up our wrong knowledge. In other words, if we merely give up our objective attention, that itself will make it clear to us that we ever know Self.

646. Self, the shining of Grace, which does not reveal itself when sought by the mind, which is merely an objective attention [that is, an attention towards second and third persons], will reveal itself when that objective attention [the mind] ceases to function. "When I look at her, the new bride will only look down towards the ground, but when I do not look at her, will lovingly look at me and mildly smile within with joy."

Michael James: The last two lines of this verse are a quotation of verse 1094 of *Tirukkural*. The unusual way of comparing Self to the bride and the ego to the bridegroom is to be noted here.

When one seeks to know Self as an object through the extroverted mind, It is not revealed. But since the cessation of extroversion is itself introversion or Selfwardness (*ahamukham*), Self will automatically shine forth when extroversion ceases.

Here readers are warned not to interpret the simile in the following wrong manner: 'The bride looks at the bridegroom only when he does not look at her. Therefore, Self will reveal itself only when we do not attend to It, that is, only when we attend to the

external world'. This is not the meaning which is intended when giving this simile. The correct interpretation should be: 'Self cannot be known by mind, but It will automatically shine forth when, and only when, the nature of the mind (namely attending to or knowing only second and third person objects) is destroyed'.

647. Do not look at this, do not look at that. If you simply remain without looking at anything, then by that powerful look at [one's own] being [that is, by that powerful attention to Self, 'I am'], you will become the supreme reality which has the outlook of the unlimited space of consciousness [*chit-akasa*].

648. Except by the Lord's Grace, which begins to function when one surrenders oneself completely to His Feet with sincere devotion, it [the reality] cannot be cognised merely by the skill of the mind of the *jiva.* So subtle is the reality.

Michael James: Refer also to verse 634.

649. Do not search and wander without attaining any [worthy] state in spite of having learnt all arts and having heard all [philosophies] that are to be heard. Simply to remain as love in Him [the Lord] who shines as love, is the state supreme!

Michael James: Verses 983 and 1023 may also be read along with this chapter.

32 Chapter Concerning the Truth of Love

(Anbu Unmai Tiran)

650. Those who do not know the taste of love, which is in no way inferior to any of the other six tastes, regard love as the seventh taste. [But know that] love is the basic taste which gives life to all the other six different tastes classified [in the past].

Michael James: The six tastes are sweet, bitter, salty, sour, pungent and astringent, and love is sometimes classified along with these as the seventh taste.

651. Only those who do not know the inexpressible taste

of love will count the taste as seven [as if love were a taste like the other six tastes]. But since we know well the taste of love, the real taste, we declare that love is the only happy taste [and that none of these others are tastes at all].

652. Only when Self, the truth of love, is known, will the knot of all the severe problems in life be severed. Only when the pinnacle of love [the supreme love or *para-bhakti*] is attained can even liberation be said to be attained. Love is verily the heart of all religions.

Sadhu Om: When the true nature of love is realized, it will completely cease to take the form of desire, which is its '*vritti rupa*' [that is, which love is in the form of a *vritti* or movement]. When desire is thus removed, all its five offshoots, namely anger, miserliness, delusion, arrogance and jealousy, will also cease to exist [refer to verse 375]. Since all the problems of life are based upon only these six vices, it is said that the knot of all problems in life will be severed by realizing the true nature of love. The truth of love is nothing but Self. How? Since the real nature of Self is *asti-bhati-priya* or *sat-chit-ananda*, love [*priya*] or *ananda* cannot be different form Self. This is why the Sages declare that love is God.

653. The truth behind the saying of wise men, "When one goes to see Sages, who are the treasures of true and clear knowledge [*jnana*], one should take some offering and should not go empty-handed," is that one should go with true love for them in the heart [that is, one should not go simply for sight-seeing or to test them].

Sri Muruganar: Since other kinds of offering may not be available for everyone and at all times, since even those offerings will be worthless if there is no love in the heart, and since if love alone is present it will fill up the deficiency created by the absence of all other offerings, love is here recommended as the supreme offering.

654. Not only by love being obstructed, but also by love being wrongly forced, are all living beings caught in and eaten up by many miseries in life.

Sadhu Om: Evil befalling the things we like is what is mentioned here as 'love being obstructed', while having things that we dislike forced upon us is what is mentioned here as 'love being wrongly forced'. Thus, when love is allowed to function in the form of a movement [*pravritti rupa*], that is, as petty desires – likes and dislikes – *jivas* have to undergo untold miseries in life. Therefore, keeping love in its pure form, not allowing it to take a *vritti* form as likes and dislikes, is both (a) not allowing love to be obstructed, and (2) not allowing love to be wrongly forced. This is why Sri Bhagavan said in the work *Who am I?*, "Likes and dislikes are both to be disliked".

655. The experience of Self, which is nothing but the form of [supreme] love, is that in which the eyes see only love, the tongue tastes only love and the touch feels only love, which is bliss.

Michael James: This verse describes that the nature of the experience of Self is the one unbroken essence [*ekarasa*] of love, that is, it explains that this world, which is nothing but the experience gained through the five senses, is transformed into and experienced as Self when the dawn of Self-knowledge takes place. Verse 62 of this work is to be read once again here.

Sri Muruganar: The Self-love which shines naturally in everything when all is known as Self, is completely different from the false and delusive feeling of pleasure which appears through the mental sense-experiences. This divine ecstasy, known as *'prema'* or *'bhakti'*, is what is expressed by Manikkavachagar in his *Thiruvandappahuti* as his great experience.

33 Chapter Concerning Form

(Sakala Tiran)

656. Those who say that the reality has no form are those who do not know the reality. For the form of the Sage [*sahaja nishtha*] who correctly knows and abides in the reality, Self, the nature of which is like the [all-pervading] nature of space, is verily the form of the reality. Know this.

Sri Muruganar: Through this verse, Sri Bhagavan disproves the

saying, 'The reality has no form'. How? Since the Sage [*sahaja nishtha*] who has known the reality as it is, is none other than the reality, He Himself is the very form of that reality. This is what is meant by saying, *'Jnani* Himself is Self'.

Michael James: Sri Muruganar here refers to the *Bhagavad Gita*, chapter 7, verse 18, in which Sri Krishna says that the *Jnani* is *Atma*.

657. Worship of the formless is possible only for those who have lost the notion 'I am this form [the body]'. Any kind of worship [that is, any effort at formless meditation] being done by those who have the notion 'I am this form [the body]' is nothing but a worship of form. Know this.

Michael James: Refer here to verse 208 of this work.

658. To worship the formless reality through thought-free thought [that is, by attending to the thought-free Self-awareness, 'I am'] is best. If one is incapable of doing this formless worship of God, to worship God in form is proper.

659. Let those who have become a prey to the delusion of action [*karma*], being unable to follow the original path of the light of Self, existence-consciousness, worship the form of their beloved God. Then they will gradually lose their delusion [towards names and forms and action] and finally [by the Grace of God or Guru] attain the Supreme Self.

Sri Muruganar: Self-attention alone is the path described in this verse as 'the original path'. But let those who are urged on to action [*karma*], being under the sway of ignorance [*avidya*], and who are thereby unable to follow the original path, take at least to the artificial path of worshipping God in form; this will in its course, lead them finally to liberation.

660. O mind performing worship [*puja*] of Lord Siva in form with great Siva-*bhakti* both within and without, do it consciously without forgetting that God exists everywhere in the form of perfect consciousness.

Sadhu Om: Wherever in this work the word 'Siva', 'Hara' or so on is used, it should be taken as referring to God in general and not as denoting only a particular personal form of God called Siva. Refer to verse 1101 of this work.

661. If one daily worships the Siva-yogi [the Sage who has become one with Siva, Self], the mind will become one-pointed, Self-enquiry will rise within, through which one will [by giving up objective attention] be established in Self, the mere consciousness ['I am'], and thus the disease of the delusion of birth [and death] will fly away.

662. If the observances prescribed in the *Vedas* do not abundantly give you real and one-pointed devotion towards the Feet of God, know that all the strenuous efforts made by you to observe them strictly and unfailingly are utterly in vain.

663. Those who always worship the holy Feet of Allah [God] will achieve all benefits and happiness together, having extinguished all the fire of suffering of the imaginary mental life led by them on account of wicked and sinful actions [karmas].

Sadhu Om: Since this is advice given to some Muslims, Sri Bhagavan used the word 'Allah' instead of God.

664. Forgetting everything that has to be obtained either in this world or in the next, enduring perfectly and with patience all the obstacles that come, and not being disheartened by any amount of poverty that comes, live in the way in which God's Grace leads you.

665. For those first-grade *sadhus* who aspire only to reach the Feet of Lord Siva [God], it is better to live as an object to be pitied in the eyes of the worldly people rather than to be envied.

34 Chapter Concerning the Five Functions of God

(Pancha Kritya Tiran)

666. Know that according to His will, law and plan, every

moment of every day the five functions of God [creation, sustenance, destruction, veiling and Grace] will be going on perfectly and unceasingly in the universe, which is full of moving and unmoving objects.

667. Every moment [i.e., many millions of times in a second] each atom [in the universe] is destroyed and newly created. Since this is going on unceasingly, it appears as if they [the objects of the universe] are the same [objects] existing continuously. Know thus.

Sadhu Om: Though each frame of a cinema film which is projected onto the screen consists of only one unmoving picture, since many such frames are projected in a second and since the speed of their projection is faster than the grasping power of our eyes, it seems to us as if the film contains one continuously moving picture. Likewise, since everything in this universe, which is under the sway of the five functions of God, is created and destroyed by the inexpressible power of God many crores of times in a second, and since the speed with which they are created and destroyed is faster than the grasping power of our mind [that is, since our mind is unable to grasp the interval between each destruction and the subsequent new creation], it seems to us as if the universe is existing continuously.

It will be useful here to note what is in fact meant in this verse by the creation and destruction of each atom of the universe. In verse 6 of *Ulladu Narpadu* Sri Bhagavan asks, “Can there be a world apart from the mind?”, and in *Who am I?* He says, “Other than thoughts, there is no such thing as the world”. Therefore, since the universe is nothing but thoughts, the rising of thoughts is the creation of the universe and the setting of thoughts is its destruction. All thoughts, which are nothing but second and third persons, rise and set only to the mind, which is nothing but the first thought, ‘I am the body’. Therefore, since all other thoughts can rise only after the mind rises, and since they must set when the mind sets, their rising and setting must necessarily be even more rapid than the rising and setting of the mind, the thought ‘I’, which, through the inexpressible and wonderful power of God, itself rises and sets many crores of times in a second. But since the mind is so fickle that it is unable to grasp or cognize even its own rising and setting, how can it grasp the rising and setting of other

thoughts? It is because the mind is thus unable to grasp the speed with which other thoughts rise and set, that it appears to the mind as if there is existing continuously something as the universe. Only when the mind scrutinizes itself, the first person, with a keen and subtle attention, and only when it is thereby able to cognize its own rising and setting, will it cease to rise and instead become motionless [*achala*]. And only in that state of motionlessness, in which the mind is no longer a mind but Self, will it be able to understand the rising and setting of the world, the second and third person thoughts, and will it have the supreme power not to allow any thought to rise. It is because Bhagavan Ramana is such a One who ever remains firmly established in Self as Self, that He was able to discover and thus reveal the truth about creation, sustenance destruction and so on.

35 Chapter Concerning the Actions of the Soul and God

(Jiveswara Seyal Tiran)

668. If it is considered that all the actions of the soul [*jiva*] are the actions of God [Siva], then can the *jiva* exist as an individual entity separate from Siva? But if the *jiva* feels that he is separate from Siva, then the *jiva's* actions cannot be Siva's actions, and the *jiva* will also be independent of Siva.

Sadhu Om: Not knowing the correct interpretation of the ancient holy words of Sages, "All are God's actions; not even an atom can move without the will of God", many people say whenever miseries come, "All these are the results of God's actions," but whenever they get some pleasures in life, they proudly say, "These are the results of my past meritorious actions [*punya karmas*]". To rectify such a mistaken outlook of the people, Sri Bhagavan gives this upadesa.

Sri Muruganar: This is a very subtle point. If the *jiva's* actions are accepted to be Siva's actions, then the *jiva* should not remain different from Siva. In such a state, the *jiva* will lose all his individual existence and Siva alone will be independent. When the *jiva* has thus surrendered, there will be no ego [*ahankara*] in him any more. The state of surrender is the state of the complete destruction of the ego. If one acts with egoism but at the same time says, "All are

Siva's actions," then it is to be understood that one has not surrendered oneself to Siva.

36 Chapter Concerning the Creation of the Soul and God

(Jiveswara Srishti Tiran)

669. God's creation does not bind: only the *jiva's* creation, which is a mental conception, binds. This is illustrated by the story of the father of the dead son being happy while the father of the living son lamented.

Sadhu Om: The story mentioned in this verse is as follows: Two neighbours called Rama and Krishna, who lived in a small village in South India, went on a pilgrimage to Kasi. On the way Rama died of fever, and Krishna continued alone on his pilgrimage. While proceeding to Kasi, Krishna met another pilgrim who was returning to the south and asked him to convey the news of Rama's death to his parents. The pilgrim duly came to that village, but while telling the news he said, due to forgetfulness, that Krishna had died and that Rama was proceeding towards Kasi. The parents of Krishna wept and grieved over the loss of their son, who was actually alive, while the parents of Rama were rejoicing over the welfare of their son, who was actually dead. Now, was not the wrong knowledge of the parents the cause for their respective misery and happiness? In the same manner, the cause for the miseries of birth and death experienced by the *jivas* is only the wrong knowledge, the wrong mental conception, that one is the body. Therefore, the conception 'I am the body', which is only a creation of the mind or *jiva*, is the sole cause of bondage. This is why Sri Bhagavan says in this verse, "Only the *jiva's* creation, which is a mental conception, binds".

According to their maturity, does not God bestow upon *jivas* their allotted *prarabdha* – the selected and arranged fruits of good and bad *karmas* – for their own uplift? All that we see as our life in a body and as a world in which we live, is nothing but our *prarabdha*. Do we not think that such a world, which is arranged according to our *karmas* and *vasanas*, is the creation of God? Thus the very purpose of the appearance or creation of the world which we see, is to teach us *vairagya* by making us experience pains and pleasures and thereby to turn our mind towards Self. The state in which the mind is ever turned Selfwards is liberation or

moksha. Therefore the very purpose of the world, which is said to be God's creation, is not to bind us but only to liberate us. That is why it is said in this verse, "God's creation does not bind".

670. God's vast creation provides the *Jnana*-Guru, God in human form, and enables one to achieve *Jnana-nishtha*, the state devoid of *vasanas*, and hence it is always helping *jivas* to attain liberation.

Sadhu Om: God's creation is due to His unbounded Grace, and its very purpose is to enable the *jivas* to attain liberation [*mukti*]. Refer to chapter three, *'Karma'*, of *The Path of Sri Ramana* – Part Two, where it is elaborately explained how God, due to His benign Grace, allots and arranges *prarabdha* in such a way as to help the *jivas* – who are suffering much on account of the fact that they perform *agamya karmas* in every lifetime – to attain liberation.

37 Chapter Concerning Negation

(Neti Seyal Tiran)

671. The fleshly body, the *prana*, the *indriyas* [the sense-organs and the organ of action], the mind, the intellect and the ego [*ahankara*] are not 'I'. Even the ignorance [of deep sleep], in which only the latent tendencies towards sense-knowledges [*vishaya-vasanas*] remain and which is devoid of all sense-knowledges and all actions, is not 'I'.

Sadhu Om: Refer to the work *Who am I?* where the ideas in this verse are expressed in prose form by Sri Bhagavan.

672. Since all these [above said alien objects] will lose their existence if not connected with me, the Reality, and since none of them can have either existence or consciousness apart from the Reality, all these, which are to be scorned as non-existent [*asat*] and insentient [*jada*], are not 'I'.

Michael James: Refer to the work *Who am I?*, where Sri Bhagavan says, "After negating as 'not I, not I' all that is mentioned above, the knowledge which remains alone, itself is 'I' ".

673. *Editor's Note*: *This verse was missed out on the manu-*

script I worked with, probably due to a typing oversight sometime in the 1980s when the original was retyped.

674. Whatever thing [among the above-said alien objects, which are not 'I'] acts in whatever way, remain aloof from those activities [that is, from the notion that it is 'I' who acts] and simply be a witness to them.

Sadhu Om: The instructions 'simply be a witness to them' which Sri Bhagavan gives in this verse should be correctly understood. The word 'witness' [*sakshi*] is used in Vedantic scriptures in a special sense, and it should be understood accordingly. The scriptures explain that Self or *Brahman* is a witness to all activities just as the sun is a witness to all that happens on earth, that is to say, all activities take place in and because of the mere presence of Self, just as all that happens on earth takes place in and because of the mere presence of the sun. However, just as the sun is unconcerned with [that is, does not attend to] all that happens on earth, so Self is unconcerned with [that is, does not attend to] all the activities that take place in Its presence. Refer here to the work *Who am I?* in which Sri Bhagavan has clearly explained this simile of the sun, which is unaffected by and unconcerned with all that happens on earth.

Therefore, when Sri Bhagavan says in this verse that we should simply be a witness to all things, He does not mean that we should remain like the sun, unattached to and unconcerned with whatever happens or does not happen in our presence. This is why He also says in this verse, 'remain aloof from them', for one who is truly aloof from something will not be in the least concerned with that thing and will not attend to it. So long as one attends to something, it means that one is concerned with that thing, in other words, that one is attached to it. That is why in the work *Who am I?* Sri Bhagavan defines non-attachment, the state of remaining aloof from the non-Self, thus, "Not attending to what-is-other [*anya*] is non-attachment [*vairagya*] or desirelessness [*nirasa*]".

However, unfortunately nowadays many writers and lecturers who have merely read the Vedantic scriptures but have never understood the correct practice by which one can separate oneself from the non-Self, recommend to people that one should witness or observe [that is, attend to] all that happens. Thus they have created a false belief in the minds of many aspirants that to witness or

observe objects is a *Jnana-sadhana*, and that by so witnessing things one can detach oneself from them. In truth, however, such objective attention is only a means of becoming attached to objects, and can never be a means of becoming detached from them. That is why Sri Bhagavan has taught that Self-enquiry, which is an attention to the first person or subject [i.e. a non-objective attention], is the sole means of knowing Self and thereby detaching oneself form the non-Self.

38 Chapter Concerning the State Devoid of Tendencies

(Nirvasanai Tiran)

675. Rather than shaving the hair of tendencies [*vasanas*] periodically, shaving them permanently by eternal Self-abidance [*atma-nishtha*], thereby not allowing them to sprout out in the form of thoughts in the brain, is the glory [i.e. significance] of *mundanam*.

676. Just like the one thorn which is used to remove another thorn which has pricked deep and is giving pain, even those good tendencies [*subha vasanas*], after removing the bad tendencies [*asubha vasanas*] in the heart, should also be discarded [since they are also a bondage].

Sadhu Om: Those *vasanas* which we are here advised to eradicate are only the *subha* and *asubha vasanas*, and not the *Sat-vasana*. The *sat-vasana* is the force of liking which enables one to remain more and more firmly in *Sat*, that is, in *Brahma-nishtha*. Verse 69 of *Sri Aruanchala Aksharamanamalai* and the third chapter and the first two appendices of *The Path of Sri Ramana* – Part Two will throw more light on this subject.

677. Good tendencies [*subha vasanas*] will be helpful only until all the filthy bad tendencies [*asubha vasanas*] are destroyed. But the pure state devoid of tendencies [*parisuddha nirvasana sthita*], in which the innumerable tendencies of both kinds [good and bad] are extinguished, is our supreme goal.

Sadhu Om: Not only bad tendencies [*asubha vasanas*] but also good tendencies [*subha vasanas*] have to be destroyed. But the reader should not confuse the word *subha vasana* with the word

Sat-vasana. *Sat-vasana* is different from *subha vasana*, and being essential for Self-abidance [*atma-nishtha*] it should be aspired for. It is this *Sat-vasana* which Sri Bhagavan prays for in verse 69 of *Aksharamanamalai.*

39 Chapter Concerning the Truth of Fasting

(Upavasa Unmai Tiran)

Michael James: The word *'upavasa'* has two meanings, namely (1) its literal meaning, 'living near' (*upa*=near; *vasa*=living), that is, living near God or Self, and (2) the meaning which is generally applied to it, 'fasting'. In this verse, however, Sri Bhagavan uses *upavasa* in its literal sense, and He uses another word, *unna-vratam*, for fasting.

678. Wise people, knowing that not yielding to the taste for the five sense-pleasures is the truth of fasting and that abiding unceasingly in Self is the truth of *upavasa* [living near God], will always observe [both fasting and *upavasa*] with great love.

Sadhu Om: The true fasting is not refraining from feeding the stomach, but refraining from feeding the five senses [by not providing them with the objects of pleasure]. Since the word '*upavasa*' literally means 'living near', the true *upavasa* is ever abiding in Self without leaving it.

40 Chapter Concerning Diet Regulation

(Ahara Niyama Tiran)

679. Since diet-regulation develops the *sattvic* quality of the mind, it will help a long way in Self-enquiry. Therefore, what is the need for one, due to confusion, to long for any other observances [*niyama*]? Diet-regulation alone will suffice.

Sadhu Om: Diet-regulation [*ahara-niyama*] means taking only *sattvic* food in moderate quantities.

Sri Muruganar: Aspirants on the path of Self-enquiry often concern themselves about the many other observances [*niyamas*]

which may aid their *sadhana*. But diet regulation alone will be sufficient, since it is the highest of all observances.

41 Chapter Concerning Acharas or Cleanliness

(Tuytanmai Tiran)

680. The reason why the scriptures recommend cleanliness of the body [*acharas*] is only to make one completely give up the attachment to the body through the *vairagya* gained by knowing practically that, in spite of being repeatedly cleaned, the filthy and fleshly body again and again becomes filthy.

Sadhu Om: A story illustrating the idea in this verse is given in *The Path of Sri Ramana* – Part Two, appendix three, pages 224 to 228.

681. When the *Vedas* enjoin, “Marry a girl”, is not their inner motive that one should give up the desire for the trivial pleasures of sex? In the same manner, when the *Vedas* enjoin people to do *yagas*, say, is not their hidden motive that one should give up all desire for the pleasures of heaven [which come as a result of doing *yagas*]?

Sadhu Om: When a mother wants to give some medicine to her child, she will call him into the house by showing him some sweets, for she knows that he will not like the medicine but will be attracted by the sweets. Likewise, knowing that immature people will not relish the idea of *Jnana* but will be attracted if they are offered sensual pleasures, the *Vedas* at first [in the *Karma Kanda*] show various means to obtain various pleasures. However, just as the secret aim of the mother is to give the medicine to her son when he comes into the house, so the secret aim of the *Vedas* is to prepare and mature people for the *Jnana Kanda* by first bringing them to the path of righteousness. The same ideas is also expressed in verse 31 of *Sri Ramana Pada Malai* by Sri Sivaprakasam Pillai and also in verses 75 and 76 of the second chapter of Kaivalya Navanitam.

682. Those who happily take as ‘I’ their fleshy and filthy body, which converts even pure food into rotten filth

soon after it is taken, are worse than a pig, which feeds on filth.

B10. Those who take as 'I' their body, which takes in pure food and converts it into filth, are worse than a pig which takes in filth and converts it into filth.

Sadhu Om: Just as a man identifies his body as 'I', so a pig identifies his body as 'I'. Though both are equally wrong in identifying a body as 'I', Sri Bhagavan points out how the body of a pig is superior to that of a man! That is, the body of a pig eats only filth and excretes it again as filth, whereas the body of human being eats good, pure food and excretes it as filth. Therefore, Sri Bhagavan's verdict is that those who identify a human body as 'I' are worse than pigs!

42 Chapter Concerning Motivelessness

(Nishkamya Tiran)

683. Worshipping God for the sake of some gain is nothing but worshipping that gain itself. Therefore, for those who want to attain the state of Siva [the state of oneness with God], the complete destruction of even a single thought of any gain is indispensable.

684. Good people will never squander their elevated *tapas*, which is meant to save their soul, for the attainment of the delusive worldly pleasures [either in this world or the next]. Know that the act of those who do *kamya tapas* with the aim of achieving the pleasures of heaven, is similar to exchanging a very precious gem for poor gruel.

Sadhu Om: The aim of *tapas* should be Self-realization and not any other thing. Since the *tapas* of many *asuras* was done only with the aim of conquering the heavenly worlds and enjoying their pleasures there, it did not lead to their salvation. Likewise, all the *tapas* done by people with aims other than Self-attainment [*atma-siddhi*] will not lead to their salvation. Such people are ignorant and do not know what *tapas* really is.

43 Chapter Concerning Control of the *Karanas* or Instruments of Knowledge

(Karana Tanda Tiran)

685. If the inner instruments of knowledge [the four *antahkaranas*, namely mind, intellect, *chittam* and ego] and the outer instruments of knowledge [the five *bahihkaranas*, namely the eyes, ears, nose, tongue and skin] have been brought under control day and night [i.e. always], the supreme Reality which shines in the inexpressible state of *turiya* will dawn.

Sri Muruganar: The subsidence [i.e. control] of all the instruments of knowledge [*karanas*] naturally at all times will be possible only when the ego subsides permanently. Therefore, aspirants should aim only to destroy the ego. Trying to control each of the above said instruments individually is not the direct path.

686. Instead of preventing the mind from flowing outwards and holding it firmly within, to break the lock [i.e. to go against the restrictions laid down by Sages for the control of the mind] and allow the mind to run out through the five senses, is as sinful an act as causing the destruction of a city by breaking the city-walls and by breaching the banks of the water-reservoirs.

687. It is only this that was illustrated by the ancient story of Brahma and Vishnu who, unnecessarily differing, arguing and quarrelling between themselves, tried to test the Column of Light [Arunachala] with their bewildered minds and failed.

Sadhu Om: Since we experience a separate individual existence only when the existence-consciousness of Self is extroverted through the five senses, it is best to subside that individuality as one in Self, having controlled the five senses.

44 Chapter Concerning the Conquest of the *Karanas*

(Karana Jaya Tiran)

688. By death of the ego – the identification with the body

which is composed of the five elements – rejecting with indifference the defects caused by the five elements [earth, water, air, fire and space], which do not pertain to Self, is the conquest of the elements [*bhuta-jayam*].

Sadhu Om: This verse should rather come under a separate chapter heading, 'The Conquest of the Elements'.

Many people believe that conquest of the five elements [*bhuta-jayam*] means the ability acquired by some *siddhas* to control and handle these elements, for example, the ability to walk over water, fire or air. However, Sri Bhagavan declares in this verse that the true conquest of the five elements is nothing but not identifying as 'I' the body, which is composed of these elements.

689. The idea 'I am the mind [*chittam*]' having gone, and thereby the confusion of the intellect [*buddhi*] having ceased and the notions of bondage and liberation having been lost, to attain the *siddhi* of firmly abiding in Self-knowledge is the conquest of the mind [*chittam-jayam*].

Sadhu Om: The belief held by many people that conquest of the mind [*chitta-jayam*] means one's acquiring the power to achieve whatever one desires, the power to enchant the minds of others, or the power to drive the minds of others according to one's own selfish motives, is wrong. Sri Bhagavan declares in this verse that the power of *Jnana* which destroys one's own *chittam* [mind or the storehouse of tendencies] is the true *chittam-jayam*.

45 Chapter Concerning *Asana* or Posture

(Asana Tiran)

690. Remaining steady without slipping down from the knowledge that the whole universe has only Self, the supreme space of *Jnana*, as its base [*asana*], is the firm and unshakable posture [*asana*] for the good *samadhi* [i.e. *sahaja samadhi*].

Sadhu Om: For the people of the present day who have been given the gross understanding that folding the legs, straightening the back, directing the eyes towards the tip of the nose and remain-

ing like a log, is the posture of *yoga* [*yoga asana*], Sri Bhagavan teaches in this verse the correct posture for *yoga* [*yoga-asana*] for *jnana-yoga*.

46 Chapter Concerning the Power of *Yoga*

(Yoga Vali Tiran)

691. Having made the liking to see through the deceitful senses subside and having thereby ended the mischievous objective knowing of the mind, the jumping ego, to know the lightless light [*prajna* or Self-consciousness] and the soundless sound [the *Atma-sphurana* 'I am'] in the heart is the true power of *yoga* [*yoga-sakti*].

692. Since it is only one's effort put forth in the past births which afterwards, on ripening, becomes the *prarabdha* [of the present and future births], know that it is also possible for oneself, who had previously put forth that effort, to change the *prarabdha* through the rare effort [of turning towards Self].

Michael James: The words 'the rare effort' which Sri Bhagavan uses here are to be understood to mean only the effort of turning the mind towards Self, for this effort is seldom made by *jivas* and is hence the rarest of all efforts. The words 'change *prarabdha*' are to be understood to mean 'transcend *prarabdha'*, for by the effort of Self-attention one loses one's individuality (together with the sense of doership and that of experiencership, which are inherent in individuality) and hence one can no longer experience the *prarabdha*. This idea is confirmed in the next verse.

693. No matter what good *karmas* yield what pleasures or what bad *karmas* yield what pains as their results, conquer the might of both of them by drowning the mind in your own Self, the supreme Reality.

Sadhu Om* and *Michael James: When the mind drowns in Self, the sense of doership and that of experiencership are lost. Then, since there remains no one to experience the *prarabdha*, it is said that the *prarabdha* has been conquered. Refer also to verse 38 of *Ulladu Narpadu* and verse 33 of *Ulladu Narpadu – Anubandham*.

694. When even in worldly affairs success is impossible without proper zeal [*shraddha*] in one's endeavour, one should not allow the zeal [*shraddha*] in doing spiritual practice to diminish until one becomes one with the limitless Supreme.

695. However great one's past sins may be, if, instead of bitterly thinking 'I am a great sinner' and lamenting over it, one dives into Self with great steadfastness, one will soon achieve Bliss.

Sadhu Om: This verse conveys the same teaching which Sri Bhagavan gave in the work *Who am I?* where He says: "However great a sinner one may be, if , not lamenting 'Oh, I am a sinner! How can I attain salvation?' but completely giving up even the thought that one is a sinner, one is steadfast in Self-attention, one will surely be saved."

696. Those who have achieved *Jnana-siddhi* [the attainment of knowledge] in this very birth through the power of God's Grace and without any effort on their part as in the kitten-illustration [*marjala-nyaya*], are those who had devotion towards God in their past births through their own effort as in the monkey-illustration [*markata-nyaya*].

Michael James: *Marjala-nyaya* means the illustration of the kitten which, without any effort on its part, is carried here and there by its mother, while *markata-nyaya* means the illustration of the baby monkey which, by its own effort, clings to its mother.

697. For those who uninterruptedly concentrate upon the unlimited and all-pervading space of consciousness [*chitrambalam*], there is not even an iota of fate [*prarabdha*]. This alone is what is meant by the scriptural saying, "Fate does not exist for those who seek heaven".

Sadhu Om: From this verse we should understand that the world 'heaven' in the scriptural saying, "Fate does not exist for those who seek heaven" does not denote any world of pleasure but only the state of liberation [*mukti*].

698. Know that *prarabdha* which, like a whirlwind, unfailingly whirls round and round the mind which takes the body as 'I', cannot even in the least stir the mind which knows itself and which shines as the pure space of consciousness.

Sadhu Om: The import of this verse is that there is no *prarabdha* for the *Jnani*.

699. Tell me, my heart, except attention [*dhyana*] to Self [*swarupa*], which shines unbroken as one's own being, what contrivance is there to burn to ashes the sense of doership [*kartrutva*], the wicked mind [or ego], which drowns the *jiva* deep down at the bottom of the ocean of karmas.

Michael James: This verse emphatically teaches that there is no means to destroy the mind or ego other than Self-attention [*swarupa-dhyana*].

47 Chapter Concerning Breath Control

(Uyir Orukka Tiran)

700. Giving up the name and form [the false aspects] of the world – which consists of existence, consciousness, bliss, name and form – is exhalation [*rechaka*], realising existence-consciousness-bliss is inhalation [*puraka*], and ever firmly abiding as existence-consciousness-bliss is retention [*kumbhaka*]. Do [such *pranayama*].

Sadhu Om: *Pranayama* means the practice of regulating the breath. In *raja yoga*, exhaling the breath is called *rechaka*, inhaling the breath is called *puraka*, and retaining the breath in the lungs is called *kumbhaka*. In this verse, the true significance of *pranayama* is described according to *jnana marga.* Refer also to chapter X, *'Jnanashtanga'*, of the work *Vichara Sangraham* of Sri Bhagavan, where this same idea is given.

Sri Muruganar: Out of the five aspects of *Brahman*, namely existence, consciousness, bliss, name and form [*sat*, *chit*, *ananda*, *nama* and *rupa*], the distinguishing features of the world are name

and form, and hence completely giving up these two is *rechaka*. When the false name and form are thus given up as a mirage-imagination, what remains are the true aspects [s*atya amsas*], namely existence, consciousness and bliss. Since these three, which are the distinguishing features of Self, are the reality of the world, realizing them is *puraka*. Ever abiding in that realization is *kumbhaka*. That is, destroying the tendencies towards the world [*loka-vasanas*], realizing Self and ever abiding as It, is the import of *Jnana-pranayama*. Though *sat*, *chit* and *ananda* are named as if three different things, in experience they are truly one and the same. In this context, refer also to verse 979 of this work.

701. Completely giving up the notion 'I am the body' is *rechaka*; diving within through the subtle scrutiny 'Who am I?' is *puraka*; and abiding as one with Self as 'I am That' is *kumbhaka* – such is *jnana-pranayama*.

Sadhu Om: In the previous verse it was said that giving up the names and forms of the world is *rechaka*. And since unceasingly attending to Self is realizing existence-consciousness-bliss, which is the reality both of the world and of oneself, diving within enquiring 'Who am I?' is here said to be the correct *puraka*. Since existence, consciousness and bliss are not really three different things but the one Self alone, ever abiding as Self is here said to be the correct *kumbhaka*. Thus in this verse *jnana-pranayama* according to the path of Sri Ramana is explained in a more practical manner.

702. When one who was deluded into taking himself to be the mind and who was wandering [through births and deaths], giving up his delusive dream-like life, enquires into Self, his own state, and ever abides as Self, that is the truth of *pranayama*. Thus should you know.

Michael James: In this verse, giving up one's delusive dream-like life is to be understood as *rechaka*, enquiring into Self, one's own state, is to be understood as *puraka*, and ever abiding as Self is to be understood as *kumbhaka*.

48 Chapter Concerning the Secret of Action

(Karma Rahasya Tiran)

B11. The mere enquiry 'To whom are these defects, *karma* [i.e. *kamya karma*, action performed with desire], *vibhakti* [lack of devotion], *viyoga* [separation from God] and *ajnana* [ignorance]?' is itself *karma*, *bhakti yoga* and *jnana*! [How?] When thus enquired, 'I' is [found to be] non-existent, [and hence] these [four defects] are [also found to be] ever non-existent. The truth is [then revealed] that we ever remain as [the defectless] Self.

Michael James: This verse is also verse 14 of *Ulladu Narpadu Anubandham*.

Sadhu Om: Since all the benefits of the four yogas, which are charted out for the removal of these four defects, are achieved through the path of Self-enquiry, 'Who am I?', it is to be understood that if one takes to Self-enquiry none of the four yogas are necessary. Refer also to *The Path of Sri Ramana* – Part One, pp. 62 to 63.

703. The essence [*tattva*] of *karma* is to know the truth of oneself by enquiring 'Who am I, the doer, who begins to do *karmas*?'. Unless the doer of *karmas*, the ego, is annihilated through enquiry, the perfect peace of supreme bliss, which is the result of *karma yoga*, cannot be achieved.

Sadhu Om: The import of this verse is that the greatest and most important *karma* a *karma yogi* has to do is to enquire into himself and thereby have the ego destroyed, and that Self-enquiry is therefore the proper *karma yoga*.

704. He who has known the truth of [i.e. the non-existence of] himself, the doer, alone is the one who has performed all the prescribed *karmas* without fail. For other than the supreme bliss [which is attained by the annihilation of the ego], what fruit is to be achieved by the hard *tapas* of daily performing the *karmas* with great care.

Sadhu Om: This verse reveals the secret that annihilating the ego through Self-enquiry is not only doing social service in the spirit of *karma-yoga* but is also performing all the prescribed daily actions [*karmanushtanas*] perfectly.

705. Since the defectless non-dual knowledge [*advaita jnana*] alone shines as the goal of the observance of all kinds of *dharmas*, the *Jnani* alone is the one who has observed all *dharmas*.

Sadhu Om: Here Sri Bhagavan explains the correct meaning of the words 'one's own *dharma'* [*svadharma*] used by Sri Krishna in the *Bhagavad Gita*, ch. 3, v. 35, while teaching about *karmas* and *dharmas*. '*Sva*' means Self, and *dharma* means to be established in it. Hence, Self-abidance [*atma-nishtha*] alone is the true *sva-dharma*, suiting all people. Thus the secret of *karma* and *dharma* is taught in this chapter.

49 Chapter Concerning *Japa*

(Japa Tiran)

B12. For those who cannot reach through *jnana-marga* [i.e. Self-enquiry] the place [source] where 'I' exists, it is better to know during *japa* the place where the supreme Word [*para-vak*] shines.

Sadhu Om: After seeing the following verse composed by Sri Muruganar [which is a *venba*, a four line verse], Sri Bhagavan composed the above verse [which is a *kural venba*, a two line verse] giving the same idea in a terser form.

706. For those who cannot dive deep within through silence, the keenest knowledge, seeking "What is the source from which the 'I' rises?", it is better to scrutinize while mentally doing *japa* wherefrom the supreme Word [*para-vak*] comes.

Sadhu Om: In the above two verses, Sri Bhagavan has explained the secret behind the second of the two instructions which he gave to Kavyakantha Ganapati Sastri on 18th November 1907.

When Ganapati Sastri approached Sri Bhagavan and prayed for instructions concerning the nature of true *tapas*, Sri

Bhagavan at first remained silent and quietly gazed at him for about fifteen minutes. Then Ganapati Sastri again prayed, “I have read about such *mouna-upadesa* in *sastras*, but I am unable to understand it. Graciously instruct me through speech also”. The first instruction then given by Sri Bhagavan was His basic teaching [*yathartha upadesa*] ‘Who am I?’, that is, to attend to the source from which ‘I’ rises. But being bewildered by the novelty of this *upadesa*, Ganapati Sastri again asked, “Can that same state be achieved through *japa* also?” Therefore, seeing that the devotee had a great liking for *japa*, Sri Bhagavan gave His second instruction, namely “If one repeats a *mantra* and if one watches wherefrom the sound of that *mantra* starts, there the mind will subside; that is *tapas*.”

When a rupee coin with a head printed on one side and a flower printed on the other side is shown to a small child and when his father asks him, “Which coin do you prefer, the one with a head or the one with a flower?”, whether the child asks for the head or the flower he will be given the same coin by this father, who will simply turn up whichever side the child likes. Just as the father thereby makes his son happy, so Sri Bhagavan made Ganapati Sastri happy by giving him the same instruction a second time in a different form. How? From where else does the sound of a *mantra* start, except from the person who repeats it? Therefore, watching the source from which the sound of the *mantra* starts means nothing but attending to ‘I’, the first person, who is doing the *japa*. Thus, gently hiding the fact that His second *upadesa* was the same as His first, Sri Bhagavan gave His devotee the same rupee coin [Self-enquiry] with the other side turned up, as if He were recommending *japa-sadhana*.

The fact that Sri Bhagavan was in an indirect way recommending only Self-enquiry even in his second instruction, as explained in this note, is confirmed in this verse by the words *‘para-vak’*, for in verse 715 Sri Bhagavan explains that *para-vak* means nothing but ‘I-I’.

707. Since you yourself are the form of *japa*, if you enquire ‘Who am I?’ and know your nature, ah, you will find that the *japa* which you were doing previously with effort will be ever going on effortlessly and untiringly in the heart.

Sadhu Om: Of all the names of God, the soundless name 'I', the first person singular consciousness, is the foremost. Since God shines equally and as one in all living beings, and since all living beings refer to themselves as 'I', it is clear that 'I' is the true nature of God. That is why Sri Bhagavan says, "You yourself [the Self-consciousness 'I'] are the form of *japa*". Since the doership in the form of effort is destroyed when one's own nature is scrutinized through the enquiry 'Who am I?', the *sahaja japa* [that is, the ever-shining Self-consciousness 'I-I'] which then continues without effort is what this verse declares 'will be ever going on effortlessly and untiringly in the heart'.

708. Until the objects known merge completely in the knowing subject [i.e. until the sense-knowledges – dyads and triads – merge into the mind and become non-existent] and until one firmly knows what the nature of the true Self is, what use is it to say vainly by mouth, "I am God, I am God"?

Sadhu Om: Since before knowing Self one identifies oneself with the body, if one says 'I am God' it will amount to saying that the body is God, which is not only untrue but also dangerous, for it will increase one's false sense of egoism. Therefore, before one gives up the identification with the body, it is meaningless and useless to repeat the *Mahavakyas* such as 'I am *Brahma*n' and 'I am He'. Moreover, since after knowing Self one abides as *Brahman* [God] alone, it is unnecessary for one to repeat 'I am *Brahma*n, I am *Brahma*n', just as it is unnecessary for a man to repeat 'I am a man, I am a man'. Hence, doing *japa* of the *Mahavakyas* is dangerous before Self-realization and is unnecessary after Self-realization.

709. Instead of wandering about repeating [doing *japa* of] 'I am the Supreme', quietly abide as the Supreme. Not by loudly shouting 'I am That', but only by abiding as 'I am That', will the miseries [of birth and death] go away.

710. Diseases will not be cured merely by repeating the name of the medicine, but only by drinking the medicine. Likewise, the bonds of birth [and death] will not leave us merely by doing *japa* of many *Mahavakyas* such as 'I am Siva' [*Sivoham*].

Michael James: What is signified by the phrase 'by drinking the medicine' is not mentioned in this verse, but since the previous verse instructs us 'quietly abide as the Supreme', we should understand that 'drinking the medicine' means only 'abiding as the Supreme'.

50 Chapter Concerning the True Temple

(Mey Koyil Tiran)

711. Those who do not keenly understand that God alone is the temple [i.e. the dwelling place or base] of both the world and soul, build temples for God and – limiting the unlimited God as a small deity and thereby veiling Him – worship Him.

Michael James: The purpose behind this verse is not to condemn temple-worship or to instruct aspirants that they should not worship God in the form of a temple deity. Its aim is only to make them understand the limitation of such worship and to help them go further by turning their attention Selfwards. However, it is clear from verse 208 of this work that Sri Bhagavan does not condemn temple-worship, which has its own value so long as the aspirant identifies his body as 'I'.

51 Chapter Concerning the Holy Name

(Tirunama Tiran)

712. On scrutiny, when the reality, the Heart [*ullam*], apparently spreads out from the heart in the form of consciousness ['I am'] to assume many thousands of names, the very first of these is 'I'. Thus should you know.

Sadhu Om: Since the Tamil word *'ullam'*, which means 'Heart', also means 'am' – the shining of the Reality, 'I' – the Reality is called by the name *'ullam'*. Compare this with the holy words of Sri Bhagavan in the 2nd verse of *Sri Arunachala Pancharatnam*, "Since you shine as 'I' in the Heart, Your name itself is Heart".

713. Since alone with 'I', the aforesaid first name [of God], 'am' always shines as the light of the Reality 'I', 'am' is also [an equally great] name [of God].

714. Of all the many thousand names, none is so truly apt, so really beautiful, as this name ['I' or 'am'] for God, who abides in the heart without thought.

Sri Muruganar: Of all the thousands of names of God adored in many different religions and in many different languages, there is no other name so beautiful and truly fitting to God as this 'am'. The name 'Jehovah' used in the Hebrew language to denote God means only this.

715. Of all the known names of God, the name 'I-I' alone will triumphantly shine when the ego is destroyed, rising as the silent Supreme Word, [*mouna-para-vak*] in the heart-space of those whose attention is introverted.

Sadhu Om: Since it is clear from this verse that what Sri Bhagavan means by the word *'para-vak'* is only the *atma-sphurana* 'I-I', the reader can understand that what He meant when He said in verse Bhagavan-12 [B12, above 706], of this work, "*vak parai ar stanam terdal*" [to know the place where the *para-vak* shines], was 'to attend to the source where 'I-I' shines', which is nothing but the method of Self-enquiry. Thus this verse confirms the idea expressed in the footnote to verse 706. See also verse 1197.

716. Even if one unceasingly remembers that divine name 'I-I', it will safely lead one to the source from which thoughts rise, thereby destroying the body-rooted ego.

Sadhu Om: This verse conveys the same teaching that is given by Sri Bhagavan in the following sentence of *Who am I?*: "Even if one incessantly thinks 'I, I', it will lead to that place [the source of the mind]."

717. [Though the word 'I' appears to denote the embodied soul or ego] since the embodied soul rises and sets, know that on scrutiny only Self, the base of [the rising and setting of] the embodied soul, is [found to be] the true import of the word 'I'.

Sadhu Om: Refer also to verse 21 of *Upadesa Undiyar*.

52 Chapter Concerning Devotion

(Bhaktimai Tiran)

718. The best devotee [*bhaktiman*] is only that hero who destroys himself [the ego], who is really a non-existent void and who is denoted by the term 'thou' [*twam*], in *Sadasiva* [Self], who shines as the meaning of the term '*That*' [*tat*], through the experience 'am', the peaceful Self-consciousness denoted by the term 'art' [*asi*].

Sadhu Om: He who identifies himself with the body and who feels 'I am so-and-so' is the *jiva* or ego, who is denoted by the term 'thou' [*twam*]. That which remains out of 'I am so-and-so' after the ego-portion 'so-and-so' has been destroyed in the blissful Self-consciousness, *Sadasiva*, is 'I am', which is denoted by the term 'That' [tat]. Thus in this verse the *Mahavakya* '*That thou art*' [*tat twam asi*] of the *Vedanta jnana-marga* is explained in the light of the *Siddhanta bhakti-marga*. Therefore, it is to be understood that the destruction of the ego, which is the aim of *jnana-marga*, is also the aim of *bhakti-marga*.

719. The best devotee is only that hero who, in the incomprehensible ocean of bliss [Self], destroys the false 'I', the thought-form which floats like a bubble in the water.

Sadhu Om: From the above two verses it is clear that the *Sahaja Jnani* alone is a perfect devotee of God.

720. Those who, with minds matured through *bhakti*, have fully drunk the essence of *bhakti*, will like to attain only the divine nectar of supreme *bhakti* as the fruit of [their] *bhakti*.

Sadhu Om: Devotees of an exalted level will never like to attain *siddhis* or pleasures either in this world or in heaven as the fruit of their devotion. Since they have tasted the essence of *bhakti*, they will pray to the Lord to bestow upon them only the boon of ever-increasing devotion towards Him. This subtle secret is revealed by Sri Bhagavan in the last line of the 7th verse of *Sri*

Arunachala Navamanimalai, where He prays, “O my dear Lord, grant me only ever-increasing love for Thy Feet”.

721. The silence devoid of the aggressive rising of the ego is Liberation [*mukti*]. The evil inadvertence [of slipping down from that state of Silence] itself is non-devotion [*vibhakti*]. Abiding as one [with Self], with the mind subsiding without rising dividingly [as another], is the true Siva-*bhakti.*

53 The Non-difference of *Bhakti* and *Jnana*

(Bhakti Jnana Abheda Tiran)

722. On scrutiny, supreme devotion [*parabhakti*] and *Jnana* are in nature one and the same. To say that one of these two is a means to the other is due to not knowing the nature of either of them.

Michael James: Since the state of supreme devotion (*parabhakti*) is the loss of individuality, it is nothing but the state of *Jnana*.

723. The reason why even those who have known the truth [that *bhakti* and *jnana* are one and the same], follow only one as if, contrary to what is said above, it were better than the other, is to prevent the aspirants who are following that one, taking it to be better, from leaving it and jumping to the other.

54 *Bhakti* and *Vichara*

(Bhakti Vichara Tiran)

724. The attainment of Realization [*samadhi*], which results at the end of the practice of enquiry into the beloved true knowledge *[mey-jnana vichara*], is solely due to the Grace of God, who shines as Self, as one’s own reality, the Soul of the soul.

Michael James: Since Self is the real life or soul of the pseudo soul, the *jiva*, It is the real God. Therefore enquiry, which is Self-attention done with great love towards Self, alone is the true worship of God. Thus only through the Grace of God, the Self, does the enquirer become firmly established in *samadhi*.

725. Unless the Lord [the God and Guru] who resides within [as Self], by the power of His Grace pulls the mind within, who can, by the mere power of the stealthy and mischievous mind, prevent its out-going nature and reach the Heart and rest in peace?

726. The Grace of God, whose form is eightfold, cannot be obtained without the Grace of Guru. Neither by *vidyas* [arts and learning] nor by any other means will Grace be obtained, but only by *bhakti* [towards Guru].

Michael James: Since God Himself incarnates as Guru, God's Grace is proclaimed to be nought without the Guru's Grace. Since *Guru-bhakti* is itself *God-bhakti*, it alone, and nothing else, will enable one to obtain God's Grace.

727. Let one not doubt whether God's Grace, the great support, has been bestowed on one or not, for the fact that one's mind is much interested in enquiry, having a great liking for release from bondage, is itself sufficient proof [that God's Grace has been bestowed].

728. To tell the truth, the Grace of God and the enquiry 'Who am I?', which is the means for abiding within, each being a great help to the other, together lead one to the state of oneness with the supreme Self.

729. Unless the supreme Reality [God or Self] Itself reveals Itself in the Heart, the delusion [*maya*] of this world-dream will not end. The enquiry 'Who am I who sees this dream?' is the worship [*upasana*] which brings forth [the Grace of the Supreme for] this revelation.

Sadhu Om: Therefore Self-enquiry is the proper *upasana* that one should do in order to gain the Grace of God and thereby awaken from this world-dream.

730. Attending to one's own Self is said to be the supreme devotion to God, who is unattainable by the mind and so on, because these two [the Self attended to by the

enquirer and the God worshipped by the devotees] are in nature [*swarupam*] one and the same.

Sadhu Om: *Swarupam*, Self, God, Guru and Grace are all different words denoting the same reality.

731. Know that the path of *Jnana* **and the path of *bhakti* are inter-related. Follow these inseparable two paths without dividing one from the other.**

B13. Attending to Self is devotion to the supreme Lord, because the Lord exists as Self.

Michael James: Verse 730 should come as 731 and vice versa.

732. If one sees 'Who am I who longs to gain the Grace of the Lord?' the ego [*anava*] will be destroyed and thereby the Grace of the Lord will reveal itself. After the ego has thus been destroyed, in the space of Grace, which is itself the Lord, no other impurity [*mala*] will exist.

733. Since the other two impurities [*karma* and *maya*] grow only by depending upon the ego [*anava*], the [root] attachment, when the ego is destroyed the other two can by no means survive.

Michael James: According to *Saiva Siddhanta*, the three impurities (malas) are *anava*, *karma*, and *maya*. The word *'anava'*, meaning ego, is derived from the word *'anu'*, meaning atom, and the reason why it is so called is explained by Sri Muruganar below.

Sri Muruganar: The delusion of identifying the body, which is not Self, as 'I' is the inner attachment or first attachment. Since this delusion makes us feel Self, which is in truth the unbroken consciousness, as an atom-like thing in the body, it is called *'anavam'*.

55 One-Pointed Devotion

(Ekagra-Bhakti Tiran)

734. Those who have one-pointed devotion towards God, like the magnetic needle [of a ship's compass] which always stands facing towards the north, will never be

perplexed and go astray in the ocean of attachment of this world.

735. Those who live in the world, clinging whole-heartedly to God, are like children who whirl round and round a pillar holding it firmly. Since they have a strong and unshakeable hold on God, they are devoid of ego [*anava*] and therefore will never fall a prey to the delusion of the world.

736. If one fixes one's mind firmly on that pure Supreme Reality which pervades all activities, one will not be affected by any number of activities that are done.

Sadhu Om: Just as the cinema screen, which is the base pervading all the pictures, is not burnt by a picture of fire or drenched by a picture of a flood, so Self, the Supreme Reality which is the base pervading all activities, is not affected by any number of activities. Therefore, since the one who attends to Self remains as Self itself, he is not affected by any number of activities he may appear to be doing.

Sri Muruganar: (i) The words 'all activities' include both worldly activities and religious activities. (ii) Since he who abides in the reality [Self] loses his doership, it is said 'he will not be affected'. Therefore, though [it may appear as if] he does everything, in fact he does nothing.

737. Among all the rice grains, only those which move here and there will be crushed by the hand-mill, while those which do not move away from the foot of the axle will not be crushed.

Michael James: Likewise, among all the people in the world, only those who stray into worldly desires, leaving the thought of the Feet of God, will be ruined by *maya*, while those who do not leave His Feet will not be so ruined.

56 Meditation and Enquiry

(Dhyana Vichara Tiran)

738. Mentally imagining oneself to be the Supreme Reality, which shines as existence-consciousness-bliss

[*sat-chit-ananda*], is meditation [*dhyana*]. Fixing the mind in Self so that the seed of false delusion [the ego] is destroyed is enquiry [*vichara*].

Sadhu Om: *Dhyana* is mental activity, an act of imagination by the mind, while *vichara* is the state of the destruction of the mind [*mano-nasa*]. The idea expressed in this verse can also be found in prose form in *Who am I?*.

739. Whoever meditates upon Self in whatever *bhava* [i.e. in whatever form or with whatever feeling of relationship], attains It only in that *bhava* [i.e. in a qualified or *saguna* manner]. Those peaceful ones who remain quiet without any such *bhava*, attain the noble and unqualified state of *Kaivalya* [the *nirguna* state of Self].

Sadhu Om: It is emphasised in this verse that by meditating on God in name and form, one attains God only in that name and form, and that only by remaining still [through Self-enquiry] without thinking or meditating, can one attain the unqualified [*nirguna*] state of God, the state of oneness [*Kaivalya*]. From this verse, the reader can understand the correct import of verse 8 of *Ulladu Narpadu*.

740. One's source [the Self] can be attained only after oneself, the ego [the separate individuality], has been completely annihilated. How to meditate 'I am That' by the ego? Therefore, the ego having been annihilated [through Self-enquiry], to remain silently in Self is the proper way.

Sadhu Om: Verse 32 of *Ulladu Narpadu* should be studied along with this verse. In the previous verse Sri Bhagavan instructed that worshipping God in name and form will not give the unqualified [*nirguna*] state, the final attainment. In this verse He instructs that even the practice of meditation upon the *Mahavakyas* such as 'I am *Brahma*n', which was wrongly believed by people up till now to be meditation on the unqualified [*nirguna-upasana*], will not give the final state, since it is nothing but a mere mental act of imagination. Sri Bhagavan asserts that silent Self-abidance, which is the correct technique of Self-enquiry, alone will give the final attainment.

741. The reason why one sees Siva as 'This [form] is He' by meditating upon Him as if He were one among the sense-objects – though [in fact] He shines as the formless consciousness – and why one laments [when that form disappears], is because of the folly of not knowing oneself by enquiring 'Who am I?'

Michael James: Refer here to verse 1070, 1072 and 1073 of this work.

Some aspirants meditate upon Siva in a particular form. When, through the strength of that meditation (*bhava-bala*), they see Him in that form as an object of sight, they believe that they have attained *Siva-darshan*. But whatever appears at one time will surely disappear at another time, and hence the aspirant will have to lament when the form of his beloved Siva disappears. However, since Siva is in reality the formless, pure consciousness which shines within as 'I', if the aspirant wishes to attain a *darshan* of Siva which will never disappear, he need only enquire within 'Who am I, the seer of this vision?' and thereby realize Self.

57 Meditation upon Self

(Swarupa-Dhyana Tiran)

742. He who well and truly meditates upon himself, who is consciousness, will be established in Siva, the Self.

58 Meditation upon Space

(Akaya-Dhyana Tiran)

743. Meditation upon the vast, unexplored and undivided space, will enable one to attain whatever [worldly] greatness one desires in whatever way one desires.

Sadhu Om: Some people, with an eye on some desired results, meditate not upon any of the names and forms of God, but upon the vast space. Even by such practices, desires are fulfilled.

744. Among those who meditate upon space, only those who then give up that meditation upon vast space [by enquiring 'Who am I who meditates upon space?'] will attain the [true] greatness of birthlessness. Others will fall into the cycle of birth and death.

Sadhu Om: It is to be understood that the phrase ‘attain whatever greatness one desires’ used in the previous verse denotes only the fulfilment of worldly desires [*kamyas*], whereas the phrase ‘attain the greatness of birthlessness’ used in the present verse denotes the attainment of Liberation.

Though space is not a name and form like that of God, it also has a name [namely space] and a form [namely vastness] of its own. Besides, it is a second person object. Therefore, in this verse it is advised that one should give up such an object of meditation and turn towards Self by enquiring ‘Who am I who know this space?’ Self is the only target of meditation which will bestow the supreme state of birthlessness and deathlessness.

745. To say that one who practised Self-abidance [*nishtha*] by clinging to the Lord, Self, the form of consciousness, lost his balance of mind and became insane, is just like saying that by drinking the nectar of immortality one died. Know thus.

Sadhu Om: It is wrong to say, as worldly people sometimes do, that someone has become mad by following the path of Self-enquiry. In this verse Sri Bhagavan assures us that one will never suffer from any such mental disorder by following this path, and that on the contrary one will achieve greater clarity and strength of mind.

This verse should be read along with the verses in the chapter concerning Self-enquiry.

59 Meditation upon Time

(Kala-Dhyana Tiran)

746. If you desire to attain the eternal greatness devoid of the defect of birth and death, the correct *sadhana* is to meditate upon that time [namely the presen]) which does not have the least modification of coming and going.

Sadhu Om: If we scrutinize the meaning of this verse in the light of verse 15 of *Ulladu Narpadu*, “The past and future exist depending upon the present; they too, while occurring were and will be present. Therefore, [among the three times] the present alone exists...”,

we can understand that what is denoted here by the phrase ‘that time which does not have the least modification of coming or going’ is only the present. Thus this verse gives us the rare clue that *atma-sadhana* can be done not only in the form of attending to the first person [out of the three persons], but also in the form of attending to the present [out of the three times]. In whichever of these two forms one may do the *atma-sadhana*, both the first person and the present time will disappear, being found to be truly non-existent, and the eternal greatness devoid of birth and death will be attained. Refer also to *The Path of Sri Ramana* – Part One, pages 135 to 136, where this idea is explained more fully.

747. Those who have given up that conception [the conception of time] – having known [by attending to the present as instructed in the previous verse] that time is nothing but Self [just as the apparent snake is nothing but a rope] – are the great ones who attain deathlessness. All others will die, slain by the sword of time.

Sadhu Om: In this verse it is indicated that the present time and the first person are similar in nature. When one scrutinizes or meditates either upon ‘I’ [the ego, the first person or first place] or upon the present [the first time], the ego and the present will disappear, being found to be non-existent, and our real existence-consciousness [*sat-chit*], ‘I am’, which transcends time and space, alone will remain. This is what is meant by the phrase “have given up even the conception of time” used by Sri Bhagavan in this verse.

It is worth noting here the warning given by Sri Bhagavan in the alternative version of verse 16 of *Ulladu Narpadu*, where He says, “Except ‘we’, where is time? If, without scrutinizing ourself, we mistake the body to be ‘we’, time will swallow us...”. The same idea is expressed in the present verse by the sentence, “All others will die, slain by the sword of time”.

748. Those who are firmly established in their own state [of Self-existence], never see any such thing as time, but only their own Self. They will no longer know the one whole reality [*tattva*] as the three different times [present, past and future].

Sadhu Om: Verse 16 of *Ulladu Narpadu* is to be read and understood here.

60 Practice

(Nididhyasana Tiran)

749. If, instead of attending to the outside universe consisting of the earth and so on – which [appears to] exist only so long as one does not enquire [into the truth] and which becomes non-existent when one does enquire – one attends to and knows that which exists in the heart, then there will be no necessity even to have the thought of rebirth.

Sadhu Om: Three points are to be inferred from this verse, namely (1) the world has no real existence, and appears to exist only on account of non-enquiry (*avichara*), (2) birth and death are mere thoughts, and (3) when one realises Self, that itself is crossing the ocean of birth and death.

The last two lines of this verse are a verse from the chapter 'Knowing the Truth' in the section 'Concerning Renunciation' in the *Tirukkural*. The way in which this verse of *Tirukkural* is handled by Sri Muruganar in the present verse is both apt and beautiful.

750. Whatever one thinks of unceasingly [until one's death], by the power of such thinking one becomes that. [Since one will therefore become Self if one always meditates upon Self] if with great love one practises [Self-attention] and [thereby] knows the nature of the attachments ['I' and 'mine'] and abides in Self so that the attachments are destroyed, the disease [of *ajnana*] which causes birth [and death] will not approach one.

Sri Muruganar: It is said in scriptures that one becomes whatever one thinks of at the time the life leaves the body. Therefore, in this verse it is instructed that those who want Liberation should think about Self in order to set aside other thoughts, which are the cause of rebirth. Since death can come at any time, any second of our life may be the second prior to death. Therefore, it is Sri Bhagavan's opinion that meditation on Self should be done every second.

751. Perfect and peaceful clarity is what the *Vedas* declare to be the ultimate goal of *tapas*. On the other hand, whatever abundant and immeasurable benefits are attained [through any particular type of *tapas*], if even then there remains an iota of desire [or wavering of mind], then that *tapas* should be given up at once.

752. As long as a thought arises in one that a thing is indispensable, let one have and enjoy it. But when, through some bitter experiences, a thought rises to be rid of it, it should be given up at once.

753. Do not determine God's Grace merely by the achievement of various kinds of prosperity [such as wealth, health and so on], which come as a result of meritorious deeds [*punyas*], but only by the peaceful clarity of consciousness, which is devoid of all mental anxieties, which are caused by forgetfulness [of Self].

Sadhu Om: Ignorant people often think that they have obtained God's Grace merely because they are provided with different kinds of worldly well-being such as wealth and health. But these are not the correct signs of God's Grace, since they are given to one merely because of one's own *punyas*, that is, they are the result of *prarabdha*. The state of *Jnana*, in which one knows Self and thereby abides in unbroken peace, devoid of miseries, alone is the true sign of God's Grace. It is also to be noted here that the peaceful clarity of Self-consciousness, which was said in verse 751 to be "the ultimate goal of *tapas*", is said in this verse to be the true sign of God's Grace.

754. Rather than achieving the powerful *sankalpa-siddhi*, which enables one to achieve anything in any way one thinks [or desires], attaining the inner peace – where not even a single thought [or desire] rises – by abiding in the true consciousness [Self], is the most powerful state.

Sadhu Om: Rather than achieving whatever one desires, to have no desire at all is the perfect state of happiness. In other words,

since every desire is nothing but a thought, the power of non-thinking is greater than the power of achieving whatever is thought of.

61 Other *Sadhanas*

(Sadhana Antara Tiran)

755. The life will become very great for *jivas* if they practice Self-enquiry without wasting the days of their life. [If they do so, the feeling] 'The wretched body-form is I' will end and the ocean of supreme enjoyment will surge within.

756. Other than Self-enquiry, which is the best [*sadhana*], there is no *sadhana* whatsoever to make the mind subside. If made to subside by other *sadhanas*, the mind will remain a while as if subsided, but will rise up again.

757. Even by breath-control the mind will subside, but this subsidence will last only so long as the breath remains controlled. When the breath starts out, the mind will also start out and will wander externally, driven by the *vasanas*.

Sadhu Om: The idea expressed in the above two verses can be found in prose form in *Who am I?*

61 Aids to Enquiry

(Vichara Sahaya Tiran)

758. The best path to subside the activities of the mind – which springs forth externally as [the triad or *triputi*] the seer, the seeing and the object seen – is to train the mind to see its own nature [in other words, to practice Self-attention].

759. Since one's own reality [Self] shines in itself as 'I am', It can know itself. The best aid to enquire into the nature of Self as It is in the heart, is the unrejectable real Self-light.

Michael James: Some people say that it is impossible for one to know oneself, just as it is impossible for the eye to see itself. But in the present verse Sri Bhagavan proves this idea to be wrong.

Since the eye is only an insentient instrument through which the sentient mind knows other things, it is unfitting to compare the ever self-luminous Self to the eye. Since Self, the reality (*Sat*), shines as consciousness (*Chit*) itself, It does not need any other consciousness in order to know Itself as 'I am'. Hence, the real Self-light (Self-consciousness) is the only aid required in order to enquire into and know Self.

760. That [pure] state of mind in between two thoughts, is the supreme Self [*paramartha swarupam*]. Having known thus through enquiry, to abide in the Heart is the [supreme] state.

761. By continuously doing *japa* many times, by meditating with love upon a [name and] form of God, and by observing diet restrictions [that is, taking only *sattvic* food in moderate quantities], the mind will become one-pointed and will gain strength, the past tendencies having been weakened.

762. Just as the wandering nature [*chalana*] of an elephant's trunk is easily restrained by the iron chains which it holds, so the stealthy [or illusive] wandering nature of the base and weak mind will be restrained by the name and form [of God which it holds].

Sadhu Om: The idea expressed in the above two verses can also be found in prose form in *Who am I?*

763. Only to such a mind which has gained the inner strength of one-pointedness, Self-enquiry will be successful. But a weak mind will be like wet wood put into the fire of *jnana-vichara*.

764. Those advanced souls who have given up all desires, knowing that increasing misery alone is the fruit of desires, will attain the eternal bliss of Self by taking to the direct path of Self-enquiry.

63 The Limit of *Sadhana*

(Sadhana Ellai Tiran)

765. So long as there is *triputi-bheda* [the experience of the difference between the triad – the knower, the act

of knowing and the object known], *sadhana* is indispensable. From [the experience of] the triad [*triputi*], one can determine that the false delusion, the ego, has not yet been annihilated.

Michael James: From this verse it is clear that the ego is the base upon which the triads (*triputis*) depend for their existence. Therefore, the reader should understand that the word 'one' (*ondru*) used in verse 9 of *Ulladu Narpadu* denotes only the ego and not Self. Refer here to *The Path of Sri Ramana* – Part Two, appendix 4 (c).

766. It is to be understood that as long as in the other two bodies [the gross and subtle bodies] the binding triad [*triputi*] appears as three different things, so long the attachment to [or bondage to] the delusive causal body will not have been destroyed, and hence the illusory rebirth will not end.

767. If the ego is destroyed by the *sadhana* [of Self-enquiry], then nothing will be seen as another [that is, the experience of the *triputis* will cease]. Then, as declared by *Advaita*, all that was previously known as deceptive other things, will be [known as] only Self.

768. Those who have destroyed the ego, the embryo [of all names and forms], and who have [thereby] seen the reality, know [the names and forms of] this world to be an illusory appearance. Since they shine as the unlimited space of consciousness [which is devoid of names and forms], their decision is that consciousness, their own nature, alone exists.

64 Self-Abidance and Discrimination

(Nishtha Viveka Tiran)

769. Self-abidance [*atma-nishtha*], which shines without defect, alone will destroy all bondage, which is non-Self. [On the other hand] discrimination [*viveka*] which distinguishes the real, one's own nature, from the unreal, is only an aid to pure desirelessness.

770. If you enquire [you will find that] you are not that [the body] which you now take yourself to be. [Therefore]

enquire what you are, drown in the heart and be directly established as 'You are That [Self]'.

771. Knowing well that there is no permanent foothold anywhere for the soul except in remaining merely as the one reality, destroy desires towards everything, but without aversion [towards anything], and abide in the Heart as one with the supreme existence-consciousness [*Sat-Chit*].

772. Those who have destroyed ignorance by the clarity of knowledge and who are established firmly in Self-abidance [*nishtha*], are completely dead-minded. They will survive as eternal *Muktas*, their mind having been given *jiva-samadhi* [i.e. having been buried alive] at the Feet of Siva.

Michael James: The words "completely dead-minded" (*chintai ara settu*) used in this verse denote the state of destruction of mind (*mano-nasa*). Since when the mind thus dies it shines as Self, it becomes eternal. Such a state of being dead while alive is denoted by the word *'jiva-samadhi'*. The phrase "They will survive as eternal *Muktas*" used in the last line of this verse denotes the state in which the mind thus dies as mind and survives as Self. The crucifixion and resurrection of Christ signifies only this. See verse 365.

65 Being Still

(Summa Iruttal Tiran)

773. What our Lord [Sri Ramana] firmly teaches us to take to as the greatest and most powerful *tapas* is only this much, "*Summa iru*" ['Just be' or 'Be still'], and not any other duty for the mind to do in the form of thoughts [such as meditation, *yoga* and so on].

Sadhu Om: Since rebirth is due to the *karmas* performed by mind, speech and body, Liberation will only be attained by just being still without the least action of these three instruments. Refer to verse 4 of *Atma Vidya Kirtanam*, in which Sri Bhagavan says, ". . . If we remain being still, without the least action of mind, speech and body, oh what a wonder, the Self-effulgence will be experienced . ". Therefore, as indicated in the above verse, the only duty enjoined

upon us by Sri Bhagavan is just to be. Refer to *Maharshi's Gospel*, Book I, ch. 6, where Sri Bhagavan says, "Your duty is TO BE".

Michael James: A more literal translation of the Tamil original of this sentence would be, "To be still [*summa iruppadu*] alone is your duty".

774. The lazy state of just being and shining [as 'I am'] is the state of Self, and that is the highest state that one can become. Revere as most virtuous ones those who have attained that lazy state, which cannot be attained except by very great and rare *tapas*.

Sadhu Om: In the above two verses it is taught that being still is the highest state. To ridicule in an inoffensive manner those who deride this state as a lazy and inert one, Sri Bhagavan here says humorously, "Revere as most virtuous ones those who have attained that lazy state".

66 The Individual 'I'

(Vyashti Aha Tiran)

775. He who behaves as 'I am so-and-so, the fleshy body, not having the true knowledge "I am is I am", will vainly suffer when the body dies, being caught by the net of the dream-like delusion that he is also dying.

Sadhu Om: The knowledge 'I am this body, I am so-and-so' is not the correct and true knowledge of oneself; it is only the ego, the false sense of individuality. Knowing oneself merely as 'I am is I am', without any adjunct such as 'this' or 'that', is the true knowledge. When Moses saw God in the form of a flame of fire, he asked Him who He was, and God replied, "I AM THAT I AM"; Sri Bhagavan often used to point out this sentence from the Old Testament, which is the only sentence in the Bible the whole of which is printed in capital letters.

776. Since the defectless Supreme Reality, which is the true knowledge, shines as the primal, one and perfect Whole, to rise as an individual separate from the Lord – who cannot be defined as 'He is this' – even in order to worship Him is wrong.

Sadhu Om: Non-dual union is the state of perfect love; separation shows a deficiency in love. Hence, however much one worships the Lord after separating oneself from Him as an individual, all such worship shows a deficiency in one's love for Him. Therefore, true love for God is to lose one's separate individuality in Him and to become one with Him.

777. To rise up forcefully as the jumping and suffering false 'I' different from the Reality, the unbroken space of *Jnana***, is the sin of cutting into two parts and slaying the highest [non-dual]** ***dharma*** **[namely** ***Brahman*****].**

Sadhu Om: Dividing the one, unbroken *Brahman* into two, a soul who worships and a God who is worshipped, is here said to be committing the heinous sin of *Brahma-hatti* [killing *Brahman*].

778. In the real world [Self] which shines as One, devoid of knowledge [of other things] and movement [***chalana*****], how is it possible for a foreign rule to arise except by one's merely making an empty imagination of a mental world which is [seemingly] different from God [Self]?**

Sadhu Om: The state of Self alone is real, and it exists and shines devoid of knowledge and ignorance, since there is no other thing for it to know or to be ignorant of, and devoid of movement, since it is the unbroken Whole. On the other hand, that which appears as a world of multiplicity and as a *jiva* which knows that multiplicity and moves in it, is nothing but a mental delusion and is not real. Thus this verse teaches us that the one Self, which is *Ajata* devoid of creating or being created], alone is the Reality.

779. The nature of bondage is merely the rising, ruinous thought 'I am different from the reality'. Since one surely cannot remain separate from the reality, reject that thought whenever it rises.

Sadhu Om: Is it not by conceiving an imaginary boundary line in the undivided sheet of the Indian Ocean that we determine 'This is the Bay of Bengal'? This line is merely a thought. In truth the ocean has never been divided. An imaginary form whose limit is deter-

mined by this thought, becomes the Bay of Bengal. Likewise, it is only because the existence-consciousness 'I' is wrongly imagined as 'I am limited to this body' that the feeling 'I am a limited and bound individual, separate from the Self' comes into existence. Is not this bondage merely a thought or an imagination? Hence, since Liberation from bondage is only the removal of the first thought 'I am the body', this verse instructs that one should remove that thought by *vichara* whenever it rises.

780. Leaving the state of Self, do not think any thought [even the first thought, 'I']; if you do, repent for it and do not commit the same folly again. "Do nothing for which you will repent; if you do, it is better not to do such a thing again."

Sadhu Om: The last two lines of this verse are verse 655 of *Tirukkural*, in which Tiruvalluvar talks about the wrongs that a man does. But since all wrongs are committed only after committing the primal wrong of rising as 'I am a man, an individual called so-and-so', Sri Bhagavan does not merely recommend a way of rectifying other wrongs, but instead He teaches that one should not at all allow the thought 'I am a man' to rise, and that if one once allows it to rise, one should at least repent for it and should not allow it to rise again. Thus Sri Bhagavan deals with the very root of the problem and shows us how to remove the poison in its nascent state.

781. Be not disheartened thinking, "When shall I attain the bliss of *yoga*, the state of Self?", for the true state of Self-knowledge shines ever the same without [the condition of] a time or a space such as far or near.

Sri Muruganar: Since Self is God, Self-abidance is itself the supreme *yoga*. For those who have renounced everything only for the sake of obtaining the bliss of consciousness [*chit-ananda*], the supreme wealth of Grace, the thought in the form of excessive longing itself becomes an obstacle to their attaining it. The difference in times such as past and future and in space, such as far and near, exist only in the mental world of imagination and not in the real world of Self. Therefore Sri Bhagavan says, "Do not lament, 'Ah, when shall I be united with Self?'," for it is better to

spend in Self-attention that time which one spends in such lamenting.

Sadhu Om: The words ‘ever the same’ used in Tamil original may also mean ‘ever united’ or ‘ever attained’. Verses 15 and 16 of *Ulladu Narpadu*, which reveal the unreality of time and space, may also be read here.

67 Retreating to the Source

(Mula Munaiva Tiran)

782. Enquiring ‘What is our birth-place [source]?’ and thereby knowing and reaching that birth-place, is the best of all paths to root out miseries, which can exist only in the place you have entered [and not in the place you were born].

Sadhu Om: From this verse we have to understand the following: The state of Self is our birth-place, and the state of individuality [*jivatman*], in which the mind, body and world appear, is the place we have entered. In the state of Self there are no miseries; it is only in the state of individuality that all kinds of miseries such as birth and death and all kinds of vices such as desire, can exist. In order to root out all such miseries and defects, Self-enquiry is the best path.

Since a girl has all her rights and all possibilities for enjoying life only in her husband’s home, the place she has entered by marriage, it is a common worldly custom to advise her, “Leave your birth-place and go to the place you have entered [i.e. go to your husband’s home]”. But quite contrary to such worldly advice, in this verse Sri Bhagavan advises spiritual aspirants, “Miseries exist only in the place you have entered, so in order to remove all miseries, go back to your birth-place”.

783. O [foolish] mind who wanders [outside] searching [for happiness], not knowing that the state of Liberation is your own right, if you go back the way you came [out], but that way you will regain the state of Liberation, the unending perfect happiness.

Sadhu Om: We should know that the state of our own Self is Liberation, the eternal happiness, and it is ever our own right. We expe-

rience miseries only because we turn our attention outwards, leaving Self. Therefore, the *sadhana* to achieve the seemingly lost happiness is just to turn our attention back towards Self, the source from which we rose and came out as a *jiva*.

784. Until one's own subsidence in the Heart [Self], the centre [of all], is experienced, the five sense-knowledges will not subside even a little, and until the delusive five sense-knowledges are completely extinguished, happiness, the knowledge of the reality, will not be attained.

Sadhu Om: The note for verse 604 is also to be read here. The removal of *ajnana* and the dawn of *Jnana* are not two separate actions, they are one and the same. Thinking these to be two separate actions, one should not be bewildered wondering which is to happen first.

The *jiva* always has the freedom to desire the loss of individuality or ego. Therefore, it is sufficient if the liking for the non-rising of the ego arises in one's Heart; be sure that the liking will be fulfilled by Grace.

785. O mind, instead of looking at and thereby worrying about that which is imagined [the world], turn towards your source and enter the Heart. In that supreme state of consciousness, all [that you were seeking before] will become the one non-dual Self, your real nature.

68 The Conduct of a *Sadhaka*

(Sadhakar Nadai Tiran)

786. When it is said that even the mere slipping down from [abidance in] the state of the pure non-dual Self is a crime for those who have started to do their duty [namely the true *tapas* of Self-abidance], will it on consideration be proper for them to interfere in the affairs of others?

Sadhu Om: In verse 266 of *Tirukkural*, Tiruvalluvar says, "Those who do *tapas* alone are those who do their duties". Therefore, the foremost duty or *dharma* of an aspirant is to do the true *tapas* of

attending to and abiding in Self. Hence slackness in Self-attention is slipping down from one's duty or *dharma*; in other words, attending to other things is the sin of *adharma*. When it is so, how much more sinful will it be if an aspirant interferes in the affairs of others?

787. If one always sees only the good qualities in others instead of seeing any bad, one's life will be very pleasant, having no room for any disgust.

788. Unless one follows the principle, "That which is essential to be reformed is only my own mind", one's mind will become more and more impure by seeing the defects of others.

789. O mind, it is not because you have attained egoless, sweet qualities that Great Ones are kind towards you; it is only because of their greatness of forgiving all your accumulated defects without minding them. Know thus.

Sadhu Om: "I have achieved very high qualities and merits, and that is why even Great Ones are very kind to me" – thinking thus, one should not have a high estimate of one's own merits and maturity. The Great Ones are always kind to us because they are able to forgive us, ignoring all our bad qualities. Therefore, like them, we should also forgive others for the wrongs they do to us and should always be kind to them.

790. To err is human nature; yet if those who are strong in having virtuous behaviour err, it is good for them to admit their errors and to reform themselves, instead of hiding them in order to maintain their prestige.

791. Since the prescribed observances [*niyamas*] help one for a long distance, they are fit to be accepted and observed. But when they [are found to] obstruct the highest practice, the enquiry for true knowledge [*mey-jnana-vichara*], give them up as useless.

Sadhu Om: All *niyamas* are prescribed only to develop the *sattvic* quality in the mind. Since it is only through a *sattvic* mind that one can understand that Self-enquiry alone is the real *sadhana*, the *niyamas* will help one only up to that extent. Then when the aspi-

rant takes to the practice of Self-enquiry, whatever *niyamas* are found to be standing as a hindrance to *vichara* should at once be given up by him. Since the rising of an 'I' is necessary to observe *niyamas*, and since in *vichara* this 'I' should not be allowed to rise at all, the *niyamas* will leave the aspirant of their own accord, like withered leaves falling from a tree.

792. When whatever you desire is obtained as you desire, do not think that it is due to the power of your *tapas*. Knowing that it is because of God's Grace, love his Feet more and more.

793. Let that which happens, happen as it has to happen [i.e. as it is destined by God to happen]. Do not think to go against it even in the least. Without doing anything as a new starting, abide as one with the *Sakshi* [Self] who peacefully shines in the Heart.

794. The fruit of [the Guru's] making a failure of one's efforts is to make one understand that only by the Guru's Grace and not merely by one's own effort can *Siddhi* [the attainment of Self-knowledge] be obtained, and [thereby] to prepare one to seek the Guru's Grace.

Sadhu Om: The annihilation of the ego is the aim of all spiritual *sadhanas*. But if it appears as if there is success in an aspirants efforts, will there not be room for that ego to sprout out again and wax with more strength at least in the form 'I have done great *tapas* and succeeded'? Therefore, in order to prevent any such thing from happening, even in the earnest efforts of an aspirant failures are many times made to occur by the Guru's Grace.

795. For those who, like Dattatreya, the son of Atri Maharshi, can learn a lesson from everything [in this world], on account of their mind being not crooked and perverted [but straightforward], the whole life in the world will be a *gurukulam* [a learning centre].

Sadhu Om: In *Srimat Bhagavatam* it is said that the sage Dattatreya learnt twenty-four good principles from twenty-four things which he came across in this world. Likewise, if we are able to learn one good lesson from everything we seek in this world,

then the entire world will be our *gurukulam* and our whole life will be a life lived at the Feet of the Guru.

> **So that it may not leave me, graciously retain in me the virtue of seeing in every creature I see, at least one good quality shining more in them than in me and of thereby being humble and submissive towards them.**
>
> ***—Sri Ramana Sahasram, verse 31***

69 Quietude

(Amaidi Tiran)

796. Higher than quietude there is no achievement; higher than quietude there is no effort; higher than quietude there is no *tapas*; higher than quietude there is no deathless life.

Sri Muruganar: What is here called quietude is the state of stillness of mind. This can be achieved only by unceasing enquiry [*vichara*]. When the mind knows that in truth there is nothing to reject or to accept, it will lose its movements [*chalana*] and will abide in supreme peace [*parama-santi*]. Since such peace is the seed of the natural [*sahaja*] state, it is here said to be the “deathless life” [*amara vazhu*].

797. Agitation is the trouble-giving enemy; agitation drives one to do heinous sins; agitation is drunkenness; agitation of mind is the deep, dark pit.

Sri Muruganar: Since the rapid movement of very subtle thoughts is itself misery, that agitation is described here as drunkenness and as a heinous enemy. Since all the inner enemies such as desire, anger and pride are nothing but the subtle movements of thoughts, he who has destroyed that movement will from that time be devoid of all kinds of enemies, heinous sins, miseries and the pit of ignorance.

70 The Conduct of a Disciple

(Sishya Achara Tiran)

798. Yet, the duty of a disciple is, even in dream, to follow steadfastly and to abide by the worthy teaching given

from His immortal experience by the Guru, who shines with the highest divine quality, that of uncaused Grace [*avyaja Karuna*].

Sadhu Om: The word 'yet' which starts this verse, alludes to the same yet which is used in the following passage of '*Who am I?*': "Just as the prey that has fallen into the jaws of a tiger cannot esape, so those who have come under the glance of the Guru's Grace will surely be saved and will never be forsaken; Yet, one should follow without fail the path shown by the Guru".

Michael James: See verse 284.

799. Though those who steadfastly follow the path to Salvation may sometimes have to swerve from the Vedic codes, either due to forgetfulness or due to any other reason [such as poverty or disease], they should never go against the words of the Guru.

Sadhu Om: Though the *Vedas* were given by God Himself, for the sake of those who have followed the *Vedas* through so many lives and who have thereby achieved maturity of mind He finally takes the form of the Guru by His Grace and teaches the path of Self-enuiry so that they may attain non-dual union with Him and thereby enjoy Him, the supreme bliss. When God thus comes in the form of the Guru, His words are to be taken by the disciple as more important and sacred than the words of the *Vedas*, because the words of the Guru are instructions given to him in his state of maturity whereas the words of the *Vedas* were instructions given to him to suit his then state of immaturity. Hence in this verse it is implied that if any of the rules of the *Vedas* stand as obstacles to Self-enquiry, even the words of the *Vedas* should be given up.

800. The words of Sages say that if one does wrong [*apacharam*] to God, it can be rectified by the Guru, but an *apacharam* done to the Guru cannot be rectified even by God.

Sri Muruganar: The words 'Vedic codes' [*veda-neri*] mean the observances [*acharas*] and so on prescribed in the *Vedas*. For those who swerve from the words of the Guru, even if one swerves from the Vedic codes one should never disobey the Guru's words.

Thus it is stressed that devotion to the Guru is greater than devotion to God.

Michael James: When verse 801 was shown to Sri Bhagavan, He composed a verse of His own conveying the same meaning. This verse of Sri Bhagavan is given below as verse B14, and is also included in *Ulladu Narpadu Anubandham* as verse 39. Since the meaning of these two verses, which are translations of verse 87 of Sri Adi Sankara's work *Tattvopadesa*, is the same, only a translation of verse B14 is given here.

B14. O son, always have [the experience of] non-duality [*advaita*] in the Heart, but never express non-duality in action. Non-duality may be applied towards the three worlds, but know that non-duality should never be applied towards the Guru.

Michael James: The three worlds are *Brahma Loka*, *Vishnu Loka* and *Siva Loka*, and applying non-duality towards the three worlds means having a mental attitude 'I am not different from Brahma, from Vishnu or from Siva'. However, so long as one's ego or individuality survives, one should not have the attitude 'I am not different from the Guru', since such an attitude would be a mere act of imagination and would make one's ego wax all the more. Thus this verse stresses the same idea as verse 800, namely that whatever wrong one may do to God, one should never do any wrong to the Guru, for the Guru is to be regarded as more sacred even than God.

71 Kindness to *Jivas*

(Jiva Karunya Tiran)

802. The *Jnani*, who has saved himself, alone can do good to others. Others, who have not dispelled the darkness of ignorance, are like the blind to the blind.

Michael James: When this four-line verse was shown to Sri Bhagavan, He composed a two-line verse of His own conveying the same meaning, which is given below.

B15. Only one who is saved can save other *jivas*, whereas others are like the blind leading the blind.

803. A *Jnani* who, having destroyed the ego, abides in the state of Self, which is *Jnana*, bestows Self-knowledge upon those who, troubled by miseries, come to Him with faith by destroying the delusion of their body-identification; His doing so is [the real] kindness to *jivas* [*jiva-karunya*]. All other kinds of kindness are of no avail [and hence are not at all real kindness].

Sadhu Om: This verse clearly stresses that bestowing Self-knowledge alone is real kindness in the name of charity, philanthropy or *jiva-karunya* – even trying to heavenize the world – is not at all real kindness. Since the state of being a *jiva* is itself the greatest misery, the real kindness to *jivas* is the *Sadguru's* bestowing upon them Self-knowledge and thereby removing their *jiva*hood and granting them *Siva*hood.

Let us suppose that a man is dreaming that he and his comrades have been attacked by a tiger. Some of his comrades are wounded and the tiger is about to attack again, so the man calls out in his dream asking someone to bring a rifle and a first-aid-box. His shouting is heard by a friend who is awake. Now what is the truly kind and useful help that the waking friend can give to the dreaming man? Will it be of any use if he brings a rifle and a first-aid-box? If he merely taps the man and wakes him up, will that not be the best help, both to the dreaming man and his wounded comrades?

All the miseries of a *jiva* are experienced by him in a dream which is occurring in the long sleep of Self-forgetfulness, and hence his waking up from that dream is the only solution for all his miseries. Since the *jiva* can be awakened to Self-knowledge only by someone who is already awake, a *Jnani* alone can do real good to the *jiva*. If any *ajnani* tries to relieve the sufferings of another, he will be just like someone in dream bringing a rifle and first-aid-box; since he does not know the real cause of the dreaming man's suffering all his help will be just like one blind man leading another blind man.

804. Since it is said that one must be the doctor for oneself, O doctor, before you come to heal us, first heal yourself and then come to us.

Sadhu Om: This verse paraphrases the English proverb, "Physician, heal thyself". Though this verse is seemingly addressed to a doctor, it is indirectly addressed to the would-be *gurus* who have merely read the scriptures and who at once come to the public, climb on the lecture platforms and begin to give instructions. To such people this verse advices, "O preachers who come to give instructions to others without having yourself attained salvation, before you start to prescribe to us the medicine to remove the disease of birth and death, first heal yourself from that disease and then come to heal us".

Sri Muruganar: Since Self-knowledge is for all people the only medicine to cure the disease of birth and death, and since no bodily disease can exist without that disease [of birth and death], one should first cure that disease.

72 Duty to Ancestors

(Pitirar Kadamai Tiran)

805. When the parents are alive the sons will not protect them [by providing them with food and other necessities], but after the parents pass away those noble and charitable sons will celebrate their annual *requiem* ceremonies with pomp and glory. How strange is the nature of this world!

73 Doing Good to Others

(Paropakara Tiran)

806. He who cheats others is his own enemy and is doing harm to himself.

807. All that one gives to others, one is giving only to oneself. If this truth is known, who will refrain from giving to others?

Sadhu Om: The idea expressed in this verse can be found in prose form in *Who am I?*

808. Since everyone is one's own Self, whoever does whatever [good or bad] to whomever, is only doing it to himself. [Therefore, one should only do good to others.]

809. By giving alms to Sridhara [Lord Vishnu] Mahabali became great, even though he was pressed and sent to *Patala Loka* [by the Lord's Feet]. Therefore, "Though it is only a ruin that befalls one by giving, it is worthy to give even at the cost of selling oneself".

Michael James: The last two lines of this verse are verse 220 of *Tirukkural*.

Sri Muruganar: There is truly nothing in the world which can be bartered for oneself; though it is so, if it is for the sake of giving even that [selling oneself] should be done. Thus giving is so much glorified. The loss that is incurred by giving is not at all a loss. "The world [of good people] will not consider it to be a ruin if a person falls in life by giving to others," says verse 117 of *Tirukkural*.

74 Compassion to Living Beings

(Bhuta Dayai Tiran)

810. He who is ever joyous, giving words assuring refuge [*abhaya*] to all creatures and behaving in such a way that they will not be afraid of him, does not fear even Yama [the God of death], since he is established in the state of equality, having the outlook of Self.

Sadhu Om: Since everyone has great attachment towards his body as 'I' and since death separates him from his body, everyone fears death. But since a *Jnani* has the experience of being separated from the body even while He is living in the body, He alone can have no fear of death and hence can give *abhaya* or refuge to anyone.

811. When a strong man by his physical strength does harm to a weak person, the *dharma* [of an aspirant] is not to become agitated [or to start angrily attacking the wrongdoer] but is to be compassionate towards the weak, knowing that God, who pities the weak, will punish the wicked properly.

Sadhu Om: In this verse it is taught that rather than the *rajasic* nature which prompts one to attack the strong and wicked person, the *sattvic* nature which prompts one to help the distressed is more

fitting to an aspirant. In this context it is worth remembering how Sri Bhagavan once prevented a devotee from attacking the thieves who had beaten Him and how He was engaged in applying balm on the bruises of the devotees and the dog who had been beaten by the thieves.

812. One who does not have the power to bring back life to a body from which it has parted, has no right to remove the life from any body for any reason.

813. Those ignorant and worthless people with evil and cruel habits which are contrary to righteousness, will, due to fear in their heart, beat and kill the pitiable and sin-filled creatures such as poisonous hissing snakes.

Sadhu Om: The 'righteousness' mentioned in this verse means compassion to living beings [*bhuta daya*], which can truly exist only as a result of the fearlessness mentioned in verse 310, namely the fearlessness even in front of death. This fearlessness will dawn in one only when the ignorance 'I am the body' is destroyed. Those in whom this ignorance is not destroyed will naturally experience fear due to their attachment to the body. Those in whom this ignorance is not destroyed will naturally experience fear due to their attachment to the body when they see poisonous creatures such as snakes, and will therefore feel a hatred towards them and will beat them to death. In order to instruct that it is wrong to do so, such habits are described in this verse as 'evil habits' and 'contrary to righteousness', and people who have such habits are described as 'ignorant and worthless'. Since the very nature of those creatures is to be poisonous and to harm others, they are said to be sin-filled and pitiable. Therefore, even though they do harm to us, to kill them is not a righteous act.

Sri Muruganar: Not only creatures like poisonous snakes, but also people who do sinful acts, are unconsciously motivated by inborn hatred. Therefore, however sinful they may be, we should not be angry with them but should only pity them for their ignorance.

814. The strongest mind [that of a *jnani*], which is never shaken even by chains of miseries that befall it, will

melt more and more and weep when devotees and others who come to Him undergo sufferings.

Sadhu Om: It is well know that Sri Bhagavan remained unruffled and His face was as cheerful as ever when some thieves beat Him, when hundreds of hornets stung His thigh, and finally when the tumour on His left arm gave unbearable pain continuously for eleven months. Yet there were occasions on which Sri Bhagavan melted and shed tears when some devotees came to Him grieving over the loss of their children or relatives, or when they were suffering with some incurable disease. Thus Sri Bhagavan Himself exemplified the idea expressed in this verse.

The next verse is a question to Sri Bhagavan that was posed by Sri Muruganar:

815. O Venkata [Sri Ramana], when You touched what You thought to be only a wide-spread, green, leafy bush, many hornets stung that very leg, causing it to swell. How is that You felt repentant [for destroying their nest] as if You had deliberately done that wrong which happened unintentionally?

Sri Muruganar: One day when Sri Bhagavan was strolling on Arunachala, He brushed His leg against a hornet's nest which was hidden in a green bush. At once a swarm of hornets flew around His leg and began to sting the leg as if pricking with needles. Sri Bhagavan stood for some time without moving the leg and said, 'This punishment is necessary for having caused this trouble [*himsa*]; accept it,', and the leg became swollen. This verse and the next are a question and answer relating to this incident.

Michael James: One day, around the year 1906, Sri Bhagavan was strolling high up on the northern slopes of Arunachala, when He happened to see a very large banyan tree. Wishing to have a closer look at it, He moved towards it, but on the way His thigh brushed against and broke a hornet's nest hidden in a green bush. The angry hornets flew out, swarmed around His leg and violently stung only that thigh which had broken their nest. Taking pity on the hornets, Sri Bhagavan said, "Yes, is it not this thigh that broke their nest? Let it be punished", and patiently allowed His leg to be

stung by the hornets. The above verse is Sri Muruganar's question about this incident, and the next verse is Sri Bhagavan's answer.

B16. Though the hornets stung the leg and made it swell when it touched and damaged their nest built in the midst of a green leafy bush, and though it was a wrong that had happened unintentionally, what indeed would be the nature of his mind [i.e. how stone-like it would be] if he did not at least feel repentant?

75 The State of Equality

(Naduvu Nilai Tiran)

816. It is wrong for those who try to live a just life to leave the state of equality and to take specially for themselves some rights which are not available to all alike.

Sadhu Om: It is worth remembering here that Bhagavan Ramana refused to accept for Himself any special food, convenience or importance which was not provided to everyone in the Ashram where He lived. Thus He Himself exemplified what He taught in this verse.

817. If others have some right, then only should one avail oneself of that right. If some right is denied to others, it would be wrong for one to avail oneself of it.

Sadhu Om: Once a foreigner, not knowing the customs of India, was sitting in the Hall stretching her legs towards Sri Bhagavan. An ashramite objected to her doing so, saying, "It is wrong to stretch one's legs towards anyone; please fold your legs". At once Sri Bhagavan, who was sitting on His couch stretching His legs towards the devotees, folded his legs. This incident shows how Sri Bhagavan did not take any special right for Himself if it was not allowed to others.

818. Those who go against the state of equality are those who go against God, who is equality itself. Though they perform due worship to God, they are completely rejecting God-worship.

Sadhu Om: Since equality [*samatvam*] is the nature of God, God-experience is called *samadhi* [the state in which the mind stands in equilibrium]. Hence those who deny equality to others, are going against God.

Sri Muruganar: Just like the sun or the rain, God does not reject anyone. Sri Ramalinga Swami addresses, "O Equality, who stands impartial both to good people and bad". Therefore, devotees should also not swerve from the state of equality; if they swerve, then their worship of God is invalid.

76 Conscience

(Mana-Sandru Tiran)

819. If one's conscience, according to which one has [always] been acting, once tells one not to live in a [seemingly] good society, it is better for one to live alone rather than to live in that society, rejecting one's pure conscience.

Sadhu Om: This verse is an instruction given to some good devotees like Sri Muruganar who came to live in the Ashram, believing it to be a favourable environment for their spiritual progress, but who soon had to leave and live alone outside the Ashram, having found for one reason or another that it was not a suitable environment. When a seemingly good society is thus bound by an advanced aspirant to be unsuitable, he should follow his conscience and live alone, and should not continue to depend in any way upon that society.

However, it should be noted that in this verse the word 'conscience' means only the conscience of an advanced aspirant, which is why it is referred to as a 'pure conscience'. Since the minds of immature people are often unable to resist their bad tendencies, their conscience may sometimes decide good to be bad and bad to be good, and hence it is not the conscience of such people that is meant here. Rather than being misled by their wrong discrimination, it would be better for such people to follow the advice of their elders.

Sri Muruganar: If one's conscience, being driven by *prarabdha*, separates and prevents one from living in a good society, it will be

better for a wise aspirant to live alone instead of rejecting his pure conscience by trying to live among the same group of people.

77 Not Uttering Falsehood

(Poyyamai Tiran)

Michael James: This verse can be interpreted in two ways:

820. (a) Failing to keep a promise one has already given to someone would be wrong as lovingly telling the supreme truth about the Self to an *anadhikari* [one who is unfit].

820. (b) It would be wrong on one's part to lovingly tell the supreme truth about the Self to an *anadhikari*, because it would contradict what one had previously taught him and, since it would thus lose its reality [in his view], he would refuse to accept it.

Sadhu Om: The word *'tannil'* used in this verse can be interpreted in two ways, namely (i) to mean 'as [wrong] as' or (ii) to mean 'on one's part'.

821. Since the Supreme Himself, who stands as the Lord in the heart of all, shines as Truth [*satyam*], the abode [of all virtues], one should not break one's given word, even though it is at a time of danger to one's life. If one breaks it, unfailing misery will result.

78 Non-Attachment

(Anasakti Tiran)

822. The boat may remain in water, but if water enters the boat it will bring great catastrophe. [Likewise] a man may live in the world, but if the world enters [the mind of] the man the whole life will be miserable.

Sri Muruganar: It is not the world itself but only the attachment towards the world which constitutes *samsara-bandha* [the bondage of mundane existence]. Attachment is caused by the mind, and not by what is outside. No harm will befall one by one's merely living in the world; but all miseries come into existence only because of one's desire to enjoy the world.

823. Only the pot, which takes in water, will drown in it, while the log, which does not absorb water, will not drown in it. [Likewise] only those who inwardly attach themselves to the world will be deluded, while those who do not attach themselves to the world will not be deluded, even though they are engaged in worldly activities.

824. One who is free at heart from any attachment will never be at any risk, even though engaged in all [activities], because of the clarity with which his mind shines.

825. Instead of clinging to this wonderful but utterly false world for refuge [or instead of depending upon it for happiness] and thereby drowning in it, it is wise to renounce it inwardly like a shell of a tamarind fruit and forget it totally.

Michael James: Even while it is in its shell, the tamarind fruit separates itself from the shell and remains unattached to it. Likewise, even while in the world, the mind should separate itself from the world and remain unattached to it. If instead it clings to the world, depending upon it for happiness, it will drown in it like a pot that takes in water.

826. A heavy building raised on foundations which are not strongly built, will collapse in devastation and disgrace. Therefore it is essential from the very outset for aspirants who work hard [on their spiritual path] to adhere strictly and at any cost to the preliminary observances.

Sri Muruganar: Preliminary observances [*charyas*] here mean devotion [*bhakti*] and non-attachment [*vairagya*].

Sadhu Om: If an aspirant does not from the very outset develop the necessary strength of character by practising control of the senses, when he is taught the *Advaitic* truth by the scriptures or Guru, he will be shaken by his worldly desire before attaining *Jnana* and will experience a downfall.

Sri Muruganar: It is essential in the beginning for aspirants to

make an effort to practise controlling the *chitta-vrittis* [the mind's running after sense-objects]. If a beginner moves closely among worldly objects, pretending as if he is free from attachment, he will at last experience disappointment.

827. If one unceasingly and firmly clings to the true Being [Self] and thereby achieves clarity [of true knowledge], the attachments, which are superimposed appearances like the blueness of the sky, will of their own accord go away leaving one pure.

79 The Greatness of Renunciation

(Turavu Matchi Tiran)

828. The path of renunciation is a slippery ground. Slipping away even mentally will lead to great ruin. Therefore, it is the duty of one who walks on the path of renunciation, the slippery ground, to protect himself lest the treacherous forgetfulness should stealthily enter his heart.

Sadhu Om: For those who are beginning on the path of renunciation, the word 'forgetfulness' used here will denote the forgetfulness of observances such as sense-control and control of conduct and character, while for those who are well advanced on the path, it will denote the forgetfulness of Self.

829. Since it is impossible to know beforehand the last moment of one's life, it is best for one who has a firm determination [to put an end to birth and death] to renounce at the very moment he gets disgust for the body and world.

Sri Muruganar: Since *vairagya*, the firm determination to put an end to birth and death, is the correct sign of maturity, one should take to renunciation [*sannyasa*] as soon as a disgust arises in one for the body and world, no matter to which of the four *ashramas* [modes of life] one may belong at that time. The ascending order of *ashramas* is applicable only to ordinary seekers and not to those mature aspirants who have intense *vairagya*.

830. Just as a fruit falls from the tree when ripe, so an

aspirant will certainly renounce his family life like saltless gruel as soon as he becomes fully mature, unless his *prarabdha* interferes as an obstacle.

Sadhu Om: If the *prarabdha* of such a mature aspirant is to remain at home, it will obstruct his outward renunciation, yet he will remain in his family with complete inner detachment. Since *prarabdha* controls one's outer life, the *ashramas* come only according to *prarabdha*; but since *prarabdha* cannot obstruct one's inner renunciation, true non-attachment [*vairagya*] can arise in one no matter to which of the *ashramas* one may belong.

831. Those who have understood that the multiple objects, which appear in and from oneself like a dream [but which are seen as if an external universe] are mere mental conceptions [projections of one's *vasanas* within] and who have therefore renounced them, alone can destroy *maya* the deceptive defect. Others do not know how to destroy this defect.

Sadhu Om: Until this world-appearance is understood to be one's own mental projection or conception, like a dream, the sense of reality [*satya-buddhi*] towards it will remain in one, and hence one will not be able to achieve perfect renunciation. The fact that the world is merely an unreal mental delusion is also stressed in the next verse.

832. Perfect *Jnanis*, who have experienced Self, the non-dual real knowledge, will not be bewildered by this dual sight [the world-appearance]. They will renounce it as an empty, tricky delusion [*maya*].

833. Buddha renounced unlimited wealth because he had understood the transitoriness [of this world]. Therefore, for one who has known the transitoriness of the world visible to the senses, it is impossible to be *laukika* [a worldly-minded person].

834. Only those who, considering the world as worthless, have fearlessly renounced it with great courage, are the wise ones who definitely see the Supreme Reality. Others are fools who see only what is unreal.

835. "Renouncing the world as ever non-existent even while it appears to exist, is the attainment of Self, the consciousness which appears to be non-existent," say the Sages.

Sadhu Om: What is meant by 'the attainment of Self'? Self alone is the ever-existing reality, while the world is an ever non-existent thing [refer to *Upadesa Manjari*, ch.2, answer to question 5]. However, so long as the world is known as if it were existing, Self will seem to be hidden or unattained. Therefore, the mere act of renouncing the world-appearance as unreal will itself be the attainment of Self, the Supreme Reality.

836. That which remains unrenounced after all that can be renounced has been renounced – that existence shining in the Heart as the real Self, alone is the attainment of bliss abundant.

837. For those who have made the rarest renunciation, that of the ego, nothing remains to be renounced.

Sadhu Om: Refer here to verse 26 of *Ulladu Narpadu.*

838. Since the *Sadhu's* mind [*chittam*] shines as *Sadasiva*, nothing remains [to be renounced or] even to be desired.

839. The majestic one [the true renunciant] who wanders carefree, possessing nothing and refusing everything, bewilders and perplexing even the mind of a king who can give anything! Ah, what a wonder!

80 The True Renunciation

(Turavu Unmai Tiran)

840. Know that, rather than one's thinking in the heart 'I have renounced everything', one's not thinking 'I am limited to the measure of the body, and I am caught in the mean bondage of family life', is a superior renunciation.

Sadhu Om: So long as a *sannyasin* feels 'I have renounced everything', is it not clear that he has a sense of identification with the body, 'I am so-and-so', and a sense of doership, 'I have renounc-

ed'? Therefore his renunciation is not a true one. On the other hand, if a family man does not feel 'I am a householder' or 'I have a family', is he not free from the sense of 'I' and 'mine'? Therefore he alone is the true renunciant. Thus this verse teaches that giving up the ego, the sense of 'I', is truly giving up everything.

81 The Oneness of Mind

(Samashti Mana Tiran)

841. The mind is said to be two [either good or bad] only in regard to the good and bad tendencies that influence it. Know that on scrutiny it is really one mind which functions differently as a good mind and as a bad mind.

Sadhu Om: The same idea is also expressed in prose in the following passage of *Who am I?*: "There are not two minds, a good mind and a bad mind. The mind is only one. Tendencies [*vasanas*] alone are of two kinds, auspicious [*subha*] and inauspicious [*asubha*]. When the mind is under the influence of auspicious tendencies it is called a good mind, and when it is under the influence of inauspicious tendencies, a bad mind."

842. Considering 'This is my mind, that is your mind' is the cause of bondage. But when the mind shines as it is, [that is, as] the power of the clear supreme Self-consciousness, it is surely only one. Know thus.

843. Know that the one real 'I' appears to be many 'I's because of the body-outlook [i.e. because of the wrong outlook that each body is an 'I']. But through the outlook of Self, the one eternal existence-consciousness, know them all to be one.

82 Annihilation of the Ego

(Ahandai Yozhivu Tiran)

844. Sever the delusive and sorrow-laden ego by the keen knowledge gained through enquiry, [because] the true happiness of peace [*santi*] cannot prevail except in a heart where this knot [*granthi*] has been rooted out.

845. By the sharp edge of the sword of divine Silence cul-

tivated in the heart by the practice of *jnana-vichara*, one should dig out and cast away the root, the ego, 'I am the body'. This is the means to attain the over-brimming happiness of peace.

846. Do not make any real and firm effort except to annihilate the feeling 'I am the body' [the ego]. Know that the ego, 'I am the body', is the sole cause of all *samsara-duhkha* [the miseries of life].

847. Know that the rarely attained supreme bliss, liberation, the greatest renunciation, the deathless death and wisdom are all one and the same – the destruction of the ignorant delusion 'I am the body'.

848. [The destruction of this delusion is also] all these: reading and listening [i.e. *sravana*], reflecting [*manana*], abiding [*nididhyasana*], the attainment of Grace, Silence, the supreme abode, peace, ritualistic sacrifice, devotion, charity, *tapas*, *dharma* and *yoga*.

B17. Know that the annihilation of the feeling 'I am the body' [*dehatma-bhava*] is charity [*danam*], austerity [*tapas*], ritualistic sacrifice [*yagna*], righteousness [*dharma*], union (yoga), devotion [*bhakti*], heaven [*Swarga*], wealth [*vastu*], peace [*santi*], truthfulness, Grace [*arul*], the state of silence [*mauna-nilai*], the deathless death, knowledge [*arivu*], renunciation, liberation [*mukti*] and bliss [*ananda*].

Sadhu Om: All that are mentioned above will be attained by merely destroying the wrong notion 'I am the body' through Self-enquiry. Therefore Self-enquiry should be understood to be all in all.

849. Though the good *dharmas* [righteous acts] are said to be so many, just as the golden ornaments are many, the sole reality of all those *dharmas* is self-sacrifice [*tyaga*], just as the sole reality of all ornaments is gold.

Michael James: The word *tyaga* means self-sacrifice, and is generally taken to denote the sacrifice of 'mine'-ness [*mamakara*]. However, since this verse comes under the chapter-heading 'Anni-

hilation of the Ego', in this context *tyaga* should be understood to denote the sacrifice of 'I'-ness [*ahankara*], that is, the giving up of the ego.

Sri Muruganar: Just as the gold, which is the common factor [*samanyam*], alone is the reality of all the diversity [*visesham*) of ornaments, so *tyaga*, which is the common factor, alone is the reality of the diversity of those *dharmas*. Just as without gold there can exist no diversity of ornaments, so without *tyaga* there can exist no diversity of *dharmas*.

850. If the extremely courageous aspirant who has renounced the 'mine'-ness [*mamakara*] – the gateway to all miseries, which are in the form of desires – succeeds in completely renouncing the 'I'-ness [the ego or *ahankara*] through *vichara*, that is the attainment of the fruit of every great *dharma*.

851. Instead of spoiling the wholeness of the existence of the Lord [Self] by proudly rising as 'I [am a separate individual]', to subside within is the correct observance [*niyama*] or *tapas* for entering the sanctum sanctorum, the presence of *Jnana*-Siva.

Sadhu Om: This verse teaches us what kind of *tapas* or observance is required to enter the *sanctum sanctorum* of Siva. The rising of the ego in the form 'I am the body' – as if it were a reality different from Self, Lord Siva – is itself spoiling the oneness of Siva. Therefore if, instead of rising thus, the ego subsides in Self, that would be the correct *tapas* or observance required for entry into the *sanctum sanctorum* of Siva. It is thus indirectly hinted here that those who do not possess such *tapas*, whosoever they may be, are not qualified for entry into the temple, the *sanctum sanctorum* of Lord Siva, since they have the worst impurity, that of a rising ego.

Sri Muruganar: Except the twice born – that is, those who have not only been born physically but have also been born again as Self by enquiring 'Where from was I, the soul, born?' – no one is qualified to enter the purest presence of Lord Siva either to see or to touch His divine form. Therefore, the observance required for temple-entry that is prescribed here is egolessness.

Sadhu Om: It is to be understood here that Self is Siva, the heart is His *sanctum sanctorum*, and the Self-realized *Jnani* is the twice-born [the true *brahmin*].

852. In the view of the wise, dispelling the ego, which contracts the perfect wholeness of the Supreme [limiting it to the body by feeling 'I am the body'], is the real and flawless worship of the Supreme [whose nature is to shine as the unlimited and adjunctless 'I am'].

853. Mad people who, instead of becoming food to God, seek to make God as food to them, will at last through egoism become food to Yama [death].

Sadhu Om: Did not many *asuras* seek to subjugate God through their worship in order to gain their own selfish ends? It is this kind of attitude towards God which is described in this verse as 'seeking to make God as food to them'. Through their selfish worship [*kamya upasana*] such people are in fact only courting their own destruction!

854. Unless the appearance [of this world] known objectively by the senses, and the wicked ego, the knower of it, die as food to Siva, who shines as the state of supreme consciousness, the supreme reality cannot be attained.

855. Can the unmoving state of the real Self be cognised by the petty [wandering] mind? [Therefore] unless the ego-sense in the form of the knot between consciousness and the insentient [*chit-jada-granthi*] is annihilated, [our] real nature cannot be attained.

856. Is it not because of the rising of an 'I' in between [consciousness and the insentient body] that one's peace is completely destroyed? [Therefore] unless the wretched *Vritrasura*, the vain ego-'I', is killed, *Kaivalyam* [the state of oneness] cannot be attained.

857. When the moonlight, the *jiva* or mind-knowledge, merges into the real sunlight, the supreme Self-knowledge, dies and becomes one with It, that is the auspicious time of *amavasya* [the night of the no moon].

858. Only by dying and by no other means can one reach *Moksha-loka* [the world of Liberation]. But what is that death? It is [not merely killing the body but] killing 'I' and 'mine', [for] to kill this body is a crime.

Sadhu Om: Death of the body is not our real death. Sri Bhagavan used to say, "Killing our body without killing our ego is just like beating and breaking a chair instead of punishing the criminal who is sitting on it". That is, the body is innocent and insentient like a chair; it is our mind or ego that is at fault, having caused all misery, and hence it alone deserves to be punished and destroyed.

859. Only those who are dead to desires for [the pleasures of] the vast delusive panorama of the world will have their life transformed into Siva. There will be no bliss by any means other than the dawn of the pure and fresh experience of Self.

Sadhu Om: It is emphasised here that true happiness lies not in the fulfilment of desires, but only in the destruction of desires.

860. If you ask, "What is that great death which will not bring any more birth and which will destroy the innumerable births and consequent deaths?", it is the death of the ignorance 'I' and 'mine'.

Sadhu Om: Every seeming death of the body is nothing but a chance to be born again in another body. Therefore, rather than seeking the death of the physical body, it is wisest to seek the very great and glorious death of 'I' and 'mine', because the petty bodily birth and death will then end forever.

861. Only by attention to the reality, 'Who am I?', will the body-bound ego-life die.

862. Destroying one's false ego in [Self-]Knowledge and abiding [in that Self-Knowledge] is the true clarity [i.e. the real waking].

863. Except through the destruction of the false delusive sense 'I' (am the body)', there is no experience of real *Jnana*.

864. He whose delusive ego [completely] subsides in and

becomes one with existence-consciousness, will cease from making the effort of starting [any action or *karma*] and will shine in the Heart, having attained the natural and peaceful state of bliss.

83 Knowledge of the Reality

(Tattva-Jnana Tiran)

865. Only when the ego-delusion, the sense of individuality [*jiva-bodha*] – which rises from scheming *Maya*, who does many heroic deeds with immense power and authority [as if she were separate from yet equal to the supreme *Brahman*] – is destroyed, will the experience of the supreme Self-knowledge [*Paramatma-bodha*] arise.

Sadhu Om* and *Michael James: From the false *Maya* arises the seemingly real sense of individuality, the false conception 'I am a *jiva*'. Only when this false sense of individuality is destroyed will knowledge of the reality be obtained. Though *Maya* creates the sense of individuality as if she were having great power and authority, she is in fact *'ma-ya'* [literally 'what is not']. Therefore, if knowledge of the reality is to dawn, *Maya* and all her creation must be found to be non-existent, just as, if the rope is to be known as it really is, the snake must be found to be non-existent.

866. When the feeling 'I am the body' [*dehatma-buddhi*] goes, the delusive confusion and anxieties will end. Aha! The 'I' shining in the heart in which enquiry is conducted, is the differenceless supreme consciousness [*nirvikalpa chit-param*].

Sadhu Om: Since the root-cause of all differences [*vikalpas*] is the *dehatma-buddhi*, and since the *dehatma-buddhi* is destroyed by enquiry, that which shines in the Heart as a result of enquiry is the differenceless *sat-chit-ananda*.

867. God, who seems to be non-existent, alone is ever existing, while oneself [the individual], who seems to be existing, is ever non-existent. The state of thus seeing one's own non-existence [*maya*] can alone be said to be the supreme *Jnana*.

868. *Sahaja samadhi*, the silence of *sattva*, alone is the beauty of *tattva-jnana* [the knowledge of the reality].

Michael James: *Sattva* is one of the three *gunas* or qualities of mind. However, in some scriptures such as *Kaivalya Navanitham* it is said that *sattva* is the original or primal nature of the mind. Therefore in this verse it is said that in the natural state (*sahaja-samadhi*) even this *sattva* – the primal nature of the mind – is silent.

Sri Muruganar: Though *sahaja samadhi* is the state transcending all the three *gunas* [*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*], since *sattva* alone is the primal nature of the mind, the phrase *'sattva-mouna'* [the silence of *sattva*] is used here.

84 Seeing

(Katchi Matchi Tiran)

869. The role [*dharma*] of seeing is ascribed to Self – the space of consciousness, the sun – only in the imagination of *ajnanis*, [because] *maya*, the empty ignorance [of seeing otherness], never exists in Self, the support [*sthanu*], [and also because] Self is without a second.

Sadhu Om: Since Self is in truth that which transcends all roles and all qualities, and since It exists as one without a second, to glorify It as the 'witness of all' [*sarva-sakshi*] or as the 'knower of all' [*sarvajna*] is merely the folly of ignorant people.

870. If I feel that I see the world, what is the secret behind this? It is that a world of sense-objects and a seer of it rise in 'me', the space of the perfect and true light of unbroken [Self-]Knowledge. Know thus definitely.

Sadhu Om: This world-appearance, which is composed of the five sense-knowledges, and the *jiva* who sees it are not real. They are mere false appearances like a mirage, having Self as their base, and they appear only with the help of the light of Self. Moreover, this world-appearance is not even seen by Self, but only by the *jiva*, who is himself a part of it. Refer here to verse 7 of *Ulladu Narpadu*, in which Sri Bhagavan says, "Although the world [the

objects seen] and the mind [the *jiva* who sees it] rise and set together, it is [not by Self, but] by the mind alone that the world is seen. [Self, on the other hand, is] the Whole which is the base for [the false appearance of] the world and the mind to rise from and set in, but which Itself shines without rising or setting, [and hence] It alone is the reality."

871. The conviction created by the senses that the appearance is real is a mistaken conviction. Know that both the senses, which enable the appearance to be known, and the *jiva*, the knower of it, are of the same degree of reality as the appearance.

Sadhu Om: Since the knower [the *jiva*], the known [the world-appearance] and the knowing [the act of perceiving the world through the five senses] form a triad [*triputi*], all of them are equally false. In other words, since even the *jiva* who is seen and his act of seeing are both a part of the world-appearance, they are both unreal as that appearance. To illustrate this, let us suppose that a film is taken of a king watching a cinema show; when this film is projected, are not the king and his act of watching the cinema show, both pictures in the film? Refer here to verse 160 and its note.

872. He who sees the seer [the knower of the mind, namely Self] will shine as the Supreme Self Itself, having destroyed the sense of difference 'I am different form the seer of the seer' and having attained his own nature.

Sadhu Om: The central idea of this verse is that he who has seen Self will shine as Self, having destroyed his individuality and having attained the non-dual knowledge [*advaita-jnana*].

Though in verse 869 and other verses of this work Sri Bhagavan says that it is wrong to ascribe to Self the function of 'seeing', in this verse He refers to Self as 'the seer of the seer'. The reason for this apparent contradiction is that He is here talking from the ordinary level of understanding – the same level of understanding on which most ancient scriptures such as *Drik-Drisya Viveka* were given. Therefore the reader should understand the expression 'the seer of the seer' to be figurative and not literal.

873. Such a seer of the seer [i.e. a *Jnani*] will never see the bondage of *karmas*. He will rule the space of supreme consciousness as His kingdom. Through the Self's sight, He will be able to rule [i.e. to view] all that is seen as His own Self. Know thus.

874. When seen through the sight of the supreme space of Self, the illusion of taking births in this mirage-like false world is [found to be] nothing but the egotistical ignorance of identifying a body as 'I'.

Sadhu Om: The attachment [*abhimani*] of identifying a body as 'I' is taking birth; unceasingly nourishing this attachment is life in this world; temporarily forgetting this attachment is death; and destroying this attachment for ever is *Jnana* or *Moksha*.

875. When seen not through the petty 'I' but through the infinite 'I', everything is known to be within Self, the real Supreme. Know that, just like the appearance of many different objects in a dream, Self alone is seen as other things [the world].

Sadhu Om: What is seen in dream appears only for the one who sleeps. Though all that are seen appear to be objects different from the dreamer [the seer of the dream], are not all of them [including the dreamer] non-different form the one who sleeps? Likewise, it is only we [the Self] that appear in this dream of the waking state as the *jiva* [the seer] and the world [the different objects that are seen].

876. Until the false appearance of the snake goes, the real rope, the base, will not be known. [Likewise] until the false appearance of the world vanishes, the real Self, the base, will not be seen.

Sadhu Om: The same idea is expressed by Sri Bhagavan in the following passage of *Who am I?*: "Just as unless the knowledge of the snake, the imaginary superimposition, goes, the knowledge of the rope, which is the base, will not be obtained, so unless the perception of the world, which is an imaginary superimposition, ceases, the realization of Self, which is the base, will not be obtained". Refer to verses 46, 876 and 877.

877. Only when the knowledge of the world ceases will the knowledge of Self be obtained. Such a glorious life illumined by Self is the true and natural life of the *jiva*; all other kinds [of so-called glorious life] will be useless for him.

Sri Muruganar: Since the word 'world' [*loka*] literally means 'that which is seen', the phrase 'the knowledge of the world' used in this verse denotes objective knowledge, the seeing-knowledge which appears with *triputi-bheda* [the difference of the seer, the seeing and the seen]. The word 'illumined' here denotes the shining of the reality as unqualified knowledge [that is, as the adjunctless consciousness 'I am'].

PART THREE

EXPERIENCE OF THE TRUTH

(Tattva Anubhava Viyal)

1 Direct Knowledge

(Aparoksha Jnana Tiran)

878. Self alone is the real eye. Therefore Self, which is known by itself, alone is the real direct knowledge. But insentient people, who do not have Self's sight, claim the knowledge of alien sense-objects to be direct knowledge.

Sadhu Om: Sri Bhagavan here describes those who do not see through the eye of Self as 'insentient people', since they see only through the insentient physical eyes. Such people say that the knowledge of the objects of this world is direct knowledge [*praty-aksha aparoksha jnana*]. However, the world seen in front of the eyes is not perceived directly, since it is known only through the medium of the mind and the five senses. Self, the knowledge of one's own existence, is a more real and more direct knowledge than the knowledge of any alien object. It is only after there is the first knowledge 'I am' that the knowledge 'the world and all else exists' can come into being, and hence no knowledge except 'I am' can be direct knowledge; Self alone is the ever-direct knowledge.

879. Can the appearance of the triads [*triputis*] be possible in the view of Self, which exists and shines as the [one] unlimited eye [of pure consciousness]? All other objects in front of It will be [found to be] Self alone, having been burnt by the powerful look of the eye of the fire of *Jnana*.

880. The one undivided real consciousness which does not know anything as different [from itself] and which is devoid of the knowledge of all these – the dual sight of good and bad, time, space, cause, effect, *karma* and so on – is the unlimited eye [mentioned in the previous verse].

2 The Ever-Direct Experience

(Nitya-Aparoksha Tiran)

881. All the benefit to be obtained by inner enquiry is only the destruction of the deceptive 'I'-sense [the ego]. It would be too much to say that it is to attain Self, which always shines clear and ever-attained.

Sadhu Om: In *Maharshi's Gospel*, Book One, chapter six, page 30, Sri Bhagavan says, "To make room, it is enough that the cramping be removed; room is not brought in from elsewhere." See also *Talks* p. 199. If the ego is destroyed, that alone will be sufficient, for it will be equivalent to attaining Self.

882. The pure and direct shining forth of Self, like that of the tenth man, is attained merely by the removal of the false forgetfulness [of Self]; the gain experienced is not a new one. Know thus.

Sadhu Om: After crossing a river, ten fools began to count themselves to see whether they had already crossed safely. But while counting each one forgot to count himself, and so they each counted only nine, which led them to believe that one of them had drowned in the river. Seeing their distress, a wayfarer understood that their misery was only due to their having forgotten to count themselves, so he said, "I will give each of you one blow, and you must each count aloud as you receive your blow". As soon as the tenth man received his blow and counted "Ten," they all exclaimed, "Yes, we are ten after all. Our lost companion has been found." In truth, however, the tenth man was not newly gained, for he had never really been lost. Likewise, the experience of Self is not to be newly gained. The fruit of *sadhana* is only the removal of the seeming forgetfulness of Self.

883. Will an ornament become gold only when its form is destroyed by melting? Is it not [in reality] gold even while it is in the form of an ornament? Therefore, know that all the three [unreal] entities [the world, soul and God] formed by the mind, are likewise [in reality] nothing but existence-consciousness [Self].

Sadhu Om: Even while they appear to be many different things,

the world, the soul and God are in reality nothing but the one Self alone. It is wrong to think that they will become Self only after their diverse forms have disappeared. In truth, only Self, the substance or reality of those diverse forms, is real, while the forms themselves are ever unreal.

884. One's seeking and attaining Self in the heart is just like a woman searching for her necklace being deluded into thinking that she had lost it though she was [in fact] always wearing it around her neck, and [finally] regaining it by touching her neck.

Michael James: Just as the woman had in fact never lost her necklace, so in truth Self is never unknown. Therefore to think that Self-knowledge is something to be newly attained is no less foolish than to think that the woman had regained her necklace only when she touched her neck.

885. Except by [the effort made through] the path of enquiring into the mysterious sense, [the ego], by whatever effort is made through other paths such as *karma*, it is impossible to attain and enjoy Self, the treasure shining in the heart.

Sadhu Om: In this verse Sri Bhagavan clearly and emphatically gives His verdict that however much one may strive on whatever other path such as *karma, yoga*, *bhakti* or *jnana*, one cannot attain the bliss of Self until one enquires 'Who am I who strive in these other paths?' Compare verse 14 of *Ulladu Narpadu – Anubandham* here.

886. If that unequalled state which is to be experienced in future through *tapas* in the form of [the six steps of] *sama* and so on is a real state, it should exist [and be experienced] even now as much as then.

Sadhu Om: If we were to say that we do not experience Self now and that we will experience it only at some time in the future, it would amount to saying that Self is non-existent at one time and existent at another time. If something is non-existent at one time and comes into existence at another time, will it not inevitably be lost once again? Therefore, since it does not exist in all the three

times [past, present and future], how can it be called a real thing [*sat vastu*]? Hence, since Self-knowledge is the reality, it should be understood to be here, now, ever-attained [*nitya-siddha*] and diectly experienced [*pratyaksha*]. The same idea is also expressed in the next verse.

887. If that state does not exist now but will come [into existence] only later, that state which will come cannot be our natural state, and hence it will not remain with us permanently but will [at some time] go away from us.

Sri Muruganar: See the last point mentioned in the previous verse. Since a state which comes at one time and goes away at another time is not the final state, no matter how glorious and blissful it may be, it will not be eternal. If one's own natural state is itself the final state, then there will be no destruction for it. It is only natural and just that any state other than one's own natural state will go away from one at some time.

888. That [*Brahman*] is the whole [*purnam*]; this [the world-appearance] is also the whole. Even when [this] whole merges into [that] whole, it is the whole. Even when [this] whole goes out [as if a separate reality] from [that] whole, the whole alone remains.

Michael James: This verse is adapted from the famous Vedic stanza, "*Purnamadah purnamidam* ...', which was sometimes quoted by Sri Bhagavan. In some commentaries upon Sri Bhagavan's teachings this Vedic stanza is wrongly interpreted to support the view that "it is both false and futile to affirm that *Brahman* alone is real and that the world [of names and forms] is unreal" (see *Sat-Darshana Bhashya*, 6th ed., pp. 6-7). However, when this stanza says, "That is whole and this is whole," it should not be taken to mean that *Brahman* is real and that the world as such is also real. Sri Bhagavan's teaching is that the whole world is unreal as world but real as *Brahman*, the whole (*purnam*), just as the snake is unreal as a snake but real as the rope, its base. Therefore this verse should be understood in the following light: "That [the rope] is the rope; this [the seeming snake] is also the rope. Even when this snake merges [disappears] into that rope, it is the rope.

Even when this snake goes out [as if a snake] from that rope, the rope alone remains.” In other words, just as in truth the rope alone exists, so in truth *Brahman*, the whole, alone exists; and just as the seeming snake is a false appearance, so the seeming world is a false appearance. Neither the going out (manifestation) of this world-appearance nor its merging again into *Brahman* is real. *Brahman* ever remains as the immutable and unchanging whole.

889. That [*Brahman*] is the supreme space; you are also the supreme space. That [the *Mahavakya*] which instructs that ‘You are That’ is also supreme space. [By ‘yoga’ or ‘union’] nothing is newly added to that real whole, which exists and shines as the common space, and [by ‘*neti-neti*’ or ‘negation’] nothing is removed from it.

Sri Muruganar: This verse explains the idea expressed in stanza 29 of *Upadesa Undiyar*. We should know that in truth there is no attaining Liberation. Since bondage is a false mental conception, Liberation is also nothing but a false mental conception. Apart from Self, there is no *Jnani* and no *ajnani*; in the state of absolute truth, there is no *jnanopadesa* or *Mahavakya*! Even the thought that the natural state of Self has been lost is false; the *tapas* done to remove the miseries caused by that thought is also false; even the state of *Jnana* in which one has again attained abidance [through *tapas*] is false! The *upadesa* is that Self alone ever exists.

890. “Except the non-dual whole [Self], all the mundane multiplicities imposed on It as ‘this’ or ‘that’ are not real even in the least; they are all nothing but a complete illusion superimposed on It” – such alone is the final verdict [of all *Jnanis*].

891. Since they [the *Jnanis*] say, “Though the One [seemingly] becomes the many [objects of this world], [in truth] It does not become anything”, and since from the very beginning everyone remains as that One [Self], the attainment of the true knowledge [that our natural state is thus ever-experienced or *nitya-aparoksha*] is Liberation.

892. After understanding theoretically [through *sravana*

and *manana*] that Self is non-dual, and after staggering again and again in one's efforts to attain [through *nididhyasana*] the practical experience of the real Self, when, [finally and with great dejection] all one's mental efforts subside, the knowledge which then shines in the heart is the nature of that reality.

Sadhu Om: This verse clearly depicts the real experience of an aspirant. Is it not the experience of many sincere aspirants that, after learning about the true nature of Self through hearing [*sravana*] and reflection [*manana*], they struggle hard in the practice [*nididhyasana*] of Self-attention but repeatedly fail in their attempts, until finally they feel weary and dejected, knowing their own inability? This verse encourages such aspirants by pointing out that when the mind, which is the root-cause of all efforts, thus comes to a complete standstill due to utter weariness, that is exactly the moment when Self will shine forth clearly and without obstruction. The Tamil song *Konjam Poru* [which has been translated into English under the title '*Wait a Little*' and printed as song No. 15 in '*A Selection of Songs from Sri Ramana Gitam*'] gives a graphic and encouraging description of the state of mind of an aspirant who reaches this state.

3 *Nirvikalpa samadhi*

(Nirvikalpa samadhi Tiran)

893. Merely being unaware of the differences [*vikalpas*] in the outside world is not the sign of the real *nirvikalpa samadhi*. The non-existence of differences [*vikalpas*] in the mind which is dead is the supreme *nirvikalpa samadhi*.

Sadhu Om: Many people are under the wrong impression that one who is in *nirvikalpa samadhi* should remain inert like an insentient log, knowing neither this body nor the world. After remaining for some time [either days, months or even years] in such a state, which is called *kashta nirvikalpa* or *kevala nirvikalpa samadhi*, one's body-consciousness will return, whereupon the mind will become extroverted and all vices such as lust and anger will rise up due to past tendencies [*vasanas*]. This kind of *samadhi*, which is an experience that may occur during the early stages of practice

of certain *sadhanas*, is only a temporary abeyance of mind [*mano-laya*]. However, the right kind of *nirvikalpa samadhi* is only the annihilation of the mind [*mano-nasa*], the permanent destruction of the primal *vikalpa* 'I am the body'. This is the state of true knowledge and is called *sahaja nirvikalpa samadhi*.

Kashta nirvikalpa samadhi may be compared to the state of a pot tied with a rope that hangs under water in a well. Like the pot submerged in the water, the mind is submerged in *laya*. But at any time the pot can be drawn out by the rope. Likewise, since the mind is not destroyed, it can at any time be drawn out again by its *vasanas* and forced to wander under their sway. But in *sahaja nirvikalpa samadhi* the mind is dissolved in Self and loses its form or individuality, like a salt-doll immersed in the ocean. Therefore it cannot rise again. *Sahaja nirvikalpa samadhi*, in which the mind is destroyed, alone is the real *samadhi*.

894. Abiding in one's natural consciousness, 'I am', is *samadhi*. Being freed from the adjunct-mixed awareness ['I am so-and-so', 'I am the body', 'I am a man', 'I am this or that' and so on], firmly abide in this boundless [adjunct-free] state [of real *samadhi*].

895. Great Sages say that the state of equilibrium which is devoid of 'I' [the ego, 'I am this or that'] is *mouna-samadhi*, the summit of knowledge [*jnananta*]. Until that *mouna-samadhi*, 'I am that [I am]', is reached, as your aim seek the annihilation of the ego.

896. Unlike the rising and setting 'I' [the ego], Self remains shining always. Therefore reject and thereby destroy the false first person, 'I [am so-and-so]', and shine as the real 'I' [Self].

Sadhu Om: The mixed awareness that rises as 'I am so-and-so', 'I am this' or 'I am that', is the false first person or ego. But the existence-consciousness, which shines alone as the pure 'I am', is the true Self-consciousness, which is devoid of all the three persons, first, second and third. Therefore, Sri Bhagavan instructs us to remain as Self, destroying the ego.

897. O my mind who is suffering [or who have lost your real nature] by thinking 'I am a *jiva*', you will again be

deceived if you think or meditate 'I am God' ['I am *Brahman*' or 'I am Siva']. [Because] in the supreme state nothing exists as 'I [am this or that]' but only the one Self [I am], the Heart [which ever exists as it is].

Sadhu Om: The feeling 'I am a man' is a mere thought. It is the form of the ego. Consequently, if one begins to think or meditate 'I am *Brahma*n' or 'I am Siva' or 'I am He', that will also be a mere thought, another form of the same ego. Therefore, since this is only another kind of thought, one cannot thereby be freed from thoughts and attain the state of Self, whose form is mere existence [*Sat*]. Hence Sri Bhagavan warns that one who meditates 'I am *Brahma*n' will be cheated in the end.

898. The well-established state in which the quiet mind [the mind devoid of thoughts] has the unbroken experience [of pure consciousness] is *samadhi*. Such a settled mind, which has the attainment of the unlimited supreme Self, is the essence of Godhood.

Sadhu Om: A wave is a wave so long as it moves; when that same wave settles down without moving, it is the ocean. Similarly, the mind is the mind so long as it moves and is limited; when the mind becomes still and unlimited, it is God or *Brahman*. The Tamil word *'Kadavul'* [God] literally means *'kadandu-ullavar'* [He who exists transcending]; hence our own real state, Self, which transcends all adjuncts such as 'this' or 'that', is God [*Kadavul*].

899. Listen to the clue to attain the reality which abides [as 'I am'] within the knowledge [the mind] as the knowledge to the knowledge [i.e. as the Self which gives light to the mind]: to scrutinize and know the object-knowing knowledge [the mind] by that same knowledge [enquiring 'What is it?' or 'Who am I?'] is the means to abide within [as the reality].

Sadhu Om: Refer to the second line of verse 5 of *Sri Arunachala Ashtakam*, in which Sri Bhagavan sings, "Just as a gem is polished, if the mind is polished on the stone called mind in order to free it of flaws, it will shine with the lustre of Thy Grace". That is, only when the mind attends to itself will it be freed from flaws and

thereby shine as the reality, the pure 'I am'. By attending to second and third persons, the mind will only gather impurities. Therefore, by engaging in any activity or *sadhana* other than Self-attention, the mind will never die. It will die only when it attends to its own form in order to find out 'What am I?' or 'Who am I?' This truth was discovered by Sri Bhagavan from His own direct experience. Meditating upon or scrutinizing anything other than the mind is neither introversion [*antarmukham*] nor a means to know the reality. Only Self-attention – the practice of the mind's attending to the first person singular feeling 'I' – will drown the mind in Self and thereby destroy it. This therefore is the only path to attain and abide as the reality.

900. Firmly abiding as 'I am I', without any movement of the mind, is the attainment of Godhood [*Sivatva-siddhi*]. [Because] the shining of the truly well-established state of knowledge [Self-knowledge] where nothing exists other than that [knowledge] is pure Siva, is it not?

901. The radiance of consciousness-bliss in the form of one awareness shining equally within and without is the supreme and blissful primal reality whose form is Silence and which is declared by *Jnanis* to be the final and unobstructable state of true knowledge.

Sadhu Om: Because the body, which is limited in time and space, is mistaken to be 'I', everyone has the feeling 'I am only inside the body and not outside'. If the body is not thus taken to be 'I', there will be no room for the feeling of difference 'in' and 'out' [see verse 251]. In such a state the Self-awareness 'I am', which shines as the one consciousness devoid of 'in' or 'out', is itself the true knowledge [*mey-jnana*], the whole and perfect primal reality.

902. Who can and how to think of the whole primal reality, whose finality is Silence, as 'I am That', and why to suffer thereby? Attaining the [thought-free] Silence is Self-abidance [*nishtha*]; it is [attained by] the destruction of [the first thought] 'I'. When 'I' is thus destroyed, where is the room to think?

Sadhu Om: When the reality is in truth nothing but the whole and

perfect Silence which exists beyond the range of thought, why should anyone suffer by trying in vain to attain it by thinking 'I am That'? Meditating 'I am *Brahma*n', 'I am He' or 'I am Siva' is futile and is not at all a proper *jnana-sadhana*. According to Sri Bhagavan, the only true *jnana-sadhana* is to lose 'I', the ego, through the enquiry 'Who am I?'

4 Changelessness

(Nirvkara Tiran)

903. O very great and rare wise men, what is the nature of change? Are the appearance and disappearance of all these things really going on continuously, or are they merely [seeming changes] appearing and disappearing [in the ever-unchanging reality]?

Sadhu Om: Verses 63, 64, 65 and 91 of this work are again to be referred to here. Some among us wrongly believe that though this universe undergoes innumerable changes such as creation, growth, decay and destruction, it is an ever-existing reality, and that all these changes are therefore true. Sri Bhagavan tells such people that their belief is wrong, and explains that the reason why they have such a wrong belief is only because of their wrong outlook of seeing the ever-unchanging Self as a universe having innumerable changes. Throughout this chapter Sri Bhagavan continues to refute their wrong belief with many arguments, and hence these verses serve as a proper condemnation of their wrong philosophy.

904. The rising and setting of this universe is a defect [or change] caused by the birth and death of the filthy and fleshy body. To ascribe these changes to Self, the space of *Jnana*, is a delusion, like ascribing the appearance and disappearance of the clouds to the sky.

Sadhu Om: The state in which the world appears and disappears is petty and unreal, since these changes are seen only by the petty ego, which appears and disappears along with the body.

905. Is there any delusion worse than the delusion of being confused into thinking that Self, which knows

the seemingly existing world to be completely non-existent, is subject to change?

Sadhu Om: Refer here to verse 4 of *Ulladu Narpadu*, where Sri Bhagavan says, "... Can the sight [the seen] be otherwise than the eye [the seer]? Verily, Self is the Eye, the unlimited [and therefore changeless] Eye." In other words, as is the eye, so is the sight. Therefore if, instead of seeing through the defective and changeful physical eyes, one sees through the unlimited and unchanging eye of Self, the universe will disappear and the one Self will be known to be existing all alone. When the truth is such, can there be any delusion more than that of seeing Self, the ever-unchanging reality, as this petty and changeful world? This is Sri Bhagavan's question.

906. Know that not even the least defect [or change] caused by the activities [in the world] will affect the unchanging Self, just as not even the least defect [or change] caused by the other [four] elements, earth, water, wind and fire, will affect the vast space.

Sadhu Om: Refer also to *Who am I?* where a similar idea is expressed by Sri Bhagavan.

907. According to the outlook of different people the same woman is considered to be wife, husband's sister, daughter-in-law, wife of one's brother-in-law, mother, and so on. Yet in truth she does not at all undergo any change in her form.

Michael James: Likewise, though in the ignorant outlook of the *jiva*, Self appears to have undergone the change of becoming many different names and forms such as the world, soul and God, in truth It remains ever unchanged.

5 Solitude

(Ekanta Tiran)

908. When scrutinized, among all the many qualities necessary for those who wish to attain the imperishable Liberation, it is the attitude of a great liking to be in permanent solitude that must be well established in their mind.

Sadhu Om: Sri Bhagavan used to say, "Solitude [*ekantam*] is not a place; it is an inner attitude of the mind" [see *Maharshi's Gospel*, Book One, ch. 2]. The mind of a *mumukshu* should always like to be in the state of happiness free from all *vasanas* or thoughts. Compare here verse 912.

6 Non-Attachment

(Asanga Tiran)

909. O mind [whose true nature is Self], though by the power of your mere presence all the *tattvas* [the unreal principles such as the mind, senses, body and world] join together and play havoc within, be not bewildered by them but be a mere witness to them by [the strength of] the experience of the knowledge of the unattached Self.

Michael James: Though this verse is addressed to the mind, it should be understood to be addressed to the mind in its true nature as Self. That is to say, this verse indirectly tells the mind, "You are in truth not that which is affected by all these *tattvas*, you are the unattached Self, in whose presence and by whose presence all these *tattvas* function. Therefore be as you really are (i.e. abide in your true nature as Self)." It is also to be noted that in this verse Sri Bhagavan instructs the mind how to remain as an unattached witness to all these unreal *tattvas*. By imagining itself to be a witness to them, the mind can never remain truly unattached to them; only by the experience of the knowledge of the unattached Self (*asanga-swarupa-jnananubhava*), that is, only by knowing and being the real and ever-unattached Self, can one remain as an unattached witness to all the unreal *tattvas*.

910. Whatever and however much [good or bad] either comes [to one] or goes [away from one], to remain as other than the knower of them and to be unaffected by them, unlike a straw carried away by the wind, is *Jnana*.

Michael James: Whatever good or bad comes to a *Sahaja Jnani*, He remains Himself ever unaffected by them and unconcerned

with them, since He knows Himself to be Self, which is other than the experiencer of the good or the bad. His state may be compared to a cinema screen, which is neither burnt by pictures of fire nor drenched by pictures of water, though it is the support of all those pictures. This completely unattached and unconcerned state of true knowledge (*jnana*) was well illustrated by the life of Sri Bhagavan. Though so many bad things went on around Him – though some bogus *sadhus* tried to pose as His guru, though because of jealousy they tried to kill Him by rolling boulders on Him, though some insincere devotees pretended to love Him but did mischief behind His back, though some people gave Him intoxicating drugs like *bhang*, though a will was made in His name, though court cases went on against Him, though an abusive book was written about Him, though some of His good devotees like Sri Muruganar were ill-treated and abused, though some so-called disciples even tried deliberately to misinterpret His teachings by mistranslating them and by writing false commentaries on them, and so on – and though so many good things went on around Him – though sincere devotees came to Him and praised Him as the Supreme Lord, though His Jayanti, Golden Jubilee and other functions were celebrated on such a grand scale, though His name and fame spread all over the world, and so on – He ever remained as a mere witness, unconcerned with all these things.

911. Unless one realizes oneself to be the unattached Self, which is like the space that remains not even in the least attached to anything, though it exists inside, outside and pervading everything, one cannot remain undeluded.

Sadhu Om: Without Self-knowledge, no one can live in this world unattached.

912. The tendencies [*vasanas*] in the heart are the real attachment [*sangam*] which should be discarded. Therefore, in whatever society [*sangam*] they may live, no harm will befall those great ones who have complete control over the deceitful mind [having destroyed all their *vasanas* and having thereby achieved *mano-nasa*].

7 Mind Control

(Mano-Nigraha Tiran)

913. For those who allow their mind to wander here and there, everything will go wrong.

Sadhu Om: *The mind should be controlled and made to subside, and should not be allowed to be dragged here and there by its vasanas.*

914. To make the mind, which runs in all directions with such a speed that even the wind is frightened, crippled like a completely lame man who cannot move anywhere, and thereby to destroy it, is to attain true immortality.

Sri Muruganar: Since the *samsara* of birth and death is in truth only for the mind and not for the Self, if, instead of moving alone with the mind as if its form were one's own form, one knows it to be other than oneself and thereby destroys it, the state of immortality will be clearly known as one's own reality.

915. To root out the weed-like three desires [the desires for women, wealth and fame] even before they sprout out, and to make the mind subside and remain still like an ocean without wind-created waves, is *Jnana*.

916. When the mind does not wander in the least through any of the senses, which are the cause that throws one into misery, and when the mind remains subsided like a stormy ocean which has completely subsided and become calm, that is *Jnana*.

917. Just as the sun cannot be seen in a densely clouded sky, so one's own Self cannot be seen in a mind-sky which is darkened by a dense cloud of thoughts.

918. One who has destroyed the mind is the emperor who rides on the neck of the elephant of supreme *Jnana*. Know for certain that the turmoil of the mind is the sole cause of the miserable bondage of the cruel and fierce birth [and death].

Sri Muruganar: Since the turmoil of the mind [*chitta-chalana*] is the

root of the miseries of birth, thoughts alone are here said to be bondage. Since one's own nature [Self] shines forth as soon as thoughts are destroyed, the one whose mind is thus destroyed is glorified in a figurative manner as an emperor riding on the elephant of *Jnana*.

919. The tranquil clarity devoid of mental turmoil is the *samadhi* which is essential for Liberation. [Therefore] try earnestly to experience the peaceful consciousness, the clarity of heart, by destroying the deceptive turmoil [of mind].

920. Without Self-realization [*atma-darsanam*], the ego will not die. Likewise, without the glorious death of the mind [or ego], this miserable dream world-scene will not disappear. Know thus.

Sadhu Om: If all the miseries of life are to come to an end, the mind must die. If the mind is to die, Self realization must be attained. Therefore only Self-realization will remove all miseries.

921. [By confronting it] no one can destroy the [mind's] nature [of rising and jumping out through the senses]. [The only way to destroy it is to] ignore it as something non-existent [i.e. as a mere false appearance]. If you know and consciously abide in Self, the base [for the rising and setting] of the [mind's] nature, the velocity of the [mind's] nature [i.e. the velocity with which it rises and jumps out through the senses] will gradually come to an end [since there will be no one to attend to it].

Sadhu Om: Vali had a boon whereby he gained half of the strength of any opponent who faced him, and therefore Ram had to kill him without confronting him face to face. Likewise, if one tries to kill the *mind-maya* by confronting it directly [that is, by struggling to control the thoughts, the rising and jumping nature of the mind], one will in fact be giving fresh strength to it. Since the mind [i.e. the rising and jumping nature of the mind] is an object known to us, we should treat it as a second person and ignore it by turning our attention towards the first person, the mere feeling 'I'. The mind will then lose the power of Grace [*anugraha-sakti*] and thus it will gradually

subside and die of its own accord. For a fuller explanation of this, refer to chapter 7 of *The Path of Sri Ramana* – Part One, 2nd edition, pages 101 to 105.

922. O people who are longing and grieving so much, not knowing in the least the means to destroy the mind so that it will function no more, the means is to experience clearly that the seen [the world-appearance] and the seer [the *jiva*] are nothing but oneself [the Self].

Michael James: So long as one experiences a difference between the seer and the seen, the mind can in no way be brought under control. And until one knows the true nature of oneself, one cannot experience that the seer and the seen are nothing but oneself and are hence non-different. Therefore, the only means to destroy the mind and thereby to control it effectively is to know one's own true nature.

In some translations this verse has been interpreted to mean that in order to end the restlessness of the mind one must "look upon all things that are perceptible and the perceiver as the Self" (see *Guru Ramana Vachana Mala*, v. 207). However, this interpretation is wrong, because unless one knows the true nature of Self, it is impossible to look upon all things as Self. Trying to imagine that everything is Self would only be a mental *bhavana*, and hence it would not be an effective means to make the restless nature of the mind subside. True experience of Self-knowledge is the only means to end the restlessness of the mind.

923. Like ornaments [seen] in gold, like water [seen] in a mirage, and like a dream city with battlements, everything that is seen is nothing but Self alone. To take them as being other than Self is wrong.

Michael James: Just as on scrutiny the many kinds of ornaments are found to be nothing but gold, the seeming water is found to be nothing but shimmering heat, and the dream city is found to be nothing but the sleeper's imagination, so, when the truth is realized, the false world appearance is found to be nothing but Self.

8 The Dead Mind

(Mrita Mana Tiran)

924. I declare with certainty that even when the mind is extinguished and is no more functioning in the form of thoughts, there still exists a reality [‘I am’] as the abode of *Jnanananda* [the bliss of true knowledge], which was [previously] hiding [as ‘I am this body’] as though it were limited by time and space.

Sadhu Om: Here Sri Bhagavan asserts that even after the annihilation of the first thought which was shining all this time as ‘I am this body’, there does exist a Self shining as *sat-chit-ananda*, ‘I am I’. Some schools of Buddhism say, “Finally there will remain nothing as Self; only a void [*sunya*] will be there”. But Sri Bhagavan refutes this wrong belief and emphatically declares from His own experience, “There certainly does exist a reality [*sat-vastu*], which is *Jnanananda*; that state is not a void [*sunya*] but a perfect whole [*purna*]”. Compare here verse 20 of *Upadesa Undiyar*, “Where ‘I’ [the ego-self] dies, that One [the real Self] shines forth spontaneously as ‘I-I’; that alone is the whole [*purna*],” and verse 12 of *Ulladu Narpadu*, “Self is true knowledge; it is not a void [though devoid of all objective knowledge]”.

925. The one which is ever-attained [*nitya-siddha*] and which shines pervading everywhere devoid of [the differences such as] ‘now’ or ‘then’, ‘here’ or ‘there’, ‘existing’ or ‘not existing’, is the pure Siva.

9 Omniscience

(Mutrunarvu Tiran)

926. Only the absolute knowledge which shines undivided because of its knowing no existing thing other than Self, and not the objective knowledge which knows even [everything that happens in all] the three times [past, present and future], is the supreme omniscience. Know thus.

Sadhu Om: The ability to know all other things such as the happenings in the past, present and future, and the ability to master all the sixty-four arts, are glorified by people as ‘Omniscience’ or

'sarvajnatvam'. However, since Sri Bhagavan says in verse 13 of *Ulladu Narpadu*, "Knowledge of multiplicity is ignorance [*ajnana*]," and since He says in verse 26 of *Ulladu Narpadu*, "Verily the ego is all," all these things which are glorified as 'omniscience' should in fact be understood to be mere objective knowledge of the ego, and hence to be nothing but ignorance. In verse 13 of *Ulladu Narpad*u Sri Bhagavan says, "That which knows [multiplicity or otherness] cannot be true knowledge," because in truth no other thing exists to know or to make known. Therefore the non-dual Self-knowledge which shines by itself as the whole [*purna*] without knowing any other thing, alone is true omniscience or *sarvajnatvam*.

927. Since even with their little knowledge so many evils and miseries are already crowded in those whose minds have not subsided, if they gain omniscience they will derive no benefit at all but only an increase in the dense darkness of delusion which is already existing within them.

Sadhu Om: An aspirant whose mind has not subsided will already be confused by all the objective knowledge he has gathered and will thereby be suffocating, being unable to bear the heavy burden of his wavering thoughts. Therefore, if he is able to acquire more knowledge, such as knowledge of all the events happening in all times and all places, will he not be still more confused and will he not be burdened with still more waves of thoughts? Hence, will it not be impossible for him to relieve himself from all thoughts and to abide peacefully in Self? Therefore, such so-called omniscience [the knowledge of all alien objects] is not only useless by also very harmful.

928. Only for him who, instead of knowing himself to be the one who merely exists, mistakes himself to be a knower [of other things] and who thereby sees the deceptive sight [of this world], omniscience consisting of a flood [of relative knowledge] is real. But for a *Jnani*, who does not have such delusion, omniscience [consisting of so many knowledges] is nothing but a lunatic knowledge.

929. Only when one is deluded [into thinking] that one is the knower [the mind], one feels 'I am one of little

knowledge'. But when the true knowledge dawns, omniscience will also perish completely like the little knowledge.

Sadhu Om: That which remains as the natural knowledge of our mere being after the *Jnana-pralaya*, the great dissolution in which all is destroyed, is the reality. Therefore, just like the little knowledge, the various kinds of omniscience must also be destroyed at that time. Thus in the supreme state of Self-knowledge, nothing will remain except the sole real knowledge, the first person singular feeling 'I am'.

930. The *Vedas* glorify God as 'omniscient' only for the sake of those who think themselves to be people of little knowledge. [But] when keenly scrutinized, [it will be understood that] since God is by nature the real Whole [apart from which no 'other' can exist for Him to know], He does not know anything.

931. "Since the experiences of seeing [hearing, tasting and so on] are, when experienced, the same for *Muktas* [as for others], and since they [the *Muktas*] are thus experiencing the many differences which appear as a result of seeing [hearing and so on], they are experiencing non-difference [even while seeing those differences]" – to say so is wrong.

Sadhu Om: People have many wrong conceptions about the state of a *Jnani* or *Jivanmukta*, and one such misconception is refuted here. "What people see as water, the *Jivanmukta* also sees as water, and what they see as food, He also sees as food. Therefore, in His experience of sense-objects, the *Jivanmukta* is the same as other people. But even while the *Jivanmukta* thus sees these differences, He sees the non-difference in them" – are there not many *pandits* and lecturers who talk and write thus, even though they themselves have no experience of *Advaita* but have only read about it in books? But who is the proper authority to say what is the actual experience of a *Jivanmukta*? Only a real *Jivanmukta*! Thus Bhagavan Sri Ramana, who has actually experienced the reality and who is the true Loka Maha Guru, declares in this verse that such statements are wrong, and in the next verse He explains how and why they are wrong. Refer also to verse 1180.

932. The *Mukta* is seen as if He is also seeing the many [different] forms only in the deluded outlook of onlookers who see the many differences; but [in fact] He is not the seer [or anything at all].

Sadhu Om: Verse 119 of this work should again be read here. So long as one sees oneself as an individual who sees the world of differences, one cannot but see the *Jnani* likewise as an individual who sees differences [see *Ulladu Narpadu* verse 4, "Can the sight be otherwise than the eye?"] But since the *jnani* is in fact nothing but the bodiless and individuality-less *Jnana* Itself, to see Him as a seer and to believe that even He is seeing differences like oneself, is true only in the outlook of *ajnanis*. The absolute truth, however, is that the *Jnani* is not a seer and that He never sees any differences, for as Sri Bhagavan says in verse 13 of *Ulladu Narpadu*, "Knowledge of multiplicity is only ignorance [*ajnana*]".

Thus in the above two verses Sri Bhagavan clearly refutes the wrong idea expressed in the note at the end of the introduction [*bhoomika*] to *Sat-Darshana-Bhashya*, 6th ed. pp. 35 to 38, namely the idea that a *Jnani* or liberated soul retains His individuality in spite of the destruction of the ego, and that He "perceives diversity in unity and experiences unity in diversity" [compare here pp. 160 to 164 of *Maha Yoga*, 7th ed.]. Regarding this erroneous theory of *bheda-abheda* or unity in diversity, Sri Bhagavan used to say that if the least difference or diversity is perceived, it means that the ego or individuality is there, so if difference is experienced, non-difference or unity would merely be a theoretical proposition and not an actual experience [see *The Golden Jubilee Souvenir*, 2nd ed., p. 295, and *The Mountain Path*, October 1981, p. 224].

933. It is only due to the wrong habit of attending to second persons that one is deluded [into thinking] that one has little knowledge. When one gives up that attention towards second persons and knows the truth of one's own Self through *vichara*, the little knowledge will die and shine as the full one [i.e. as the full knowledge or true omniscience].

934. Knowing directly the non-dual Self, which because of one's wrong outlook appears as all these many [names and] forms, [the universe], and nothing else, is [true] experience.

Sadhu Om: Are there not some deluded people who think that this world has been wrongly created by God as a mixture of pain and pleasure, and who therefore try through some kinds of yoga to eradicate the pain and to establish pleasure and thereby to heavenize the world? In order to point out that their way of thinking is wrong and their aim is sheer foolishness, Sri Bhagavan begins this verse with the words "Because of one's wrong outlook," thereby implying as follows: "It is only because of your wrong outlook that this world appears to you in such a way; God never created it thus; the wrongs you see in the world are a result of *drishti-dosha* [a defect in your outlook] and not of *srishti-dosha* [a defect in God's creation]". Therefore Sri Bhagavan teaches that true omniscience or *sarvajnatvam* is only the removal of one's wrong outlook [*dosha-drishti*] through the attainment of *Jnana-drishti* [the outlook of *Jnana*].

935. If all one's mental images [that appear] in dream were not [already] dwelling within [one], they could not be seen. Since it is so, to attain the experience of Self, in which dwell all these [mental images that appear] in the waking state, alone is [true] omniscience.

Michael James: All that one sees in dream is only a projection of the *vasanas* already dwelling within one. Likewise, all that one sees even in this waking state is only a projection of one's own *vasanas* (see verse 84). Therefore, in order to know all, one need only know oneself. However, since oneself (the Self) alone truly exists and since the so-called 'all' is truly non-existent and unreal, there will be no 'all' to be known when oneself is known. As Sri Bhagavan says in the second line of the third verse of *Atmavidya Kirtanam*, "What [else] is there to know after oneself is known?"

936. If one does not take to the deluded life of modern civilization, if one rejects the liking towards the useless worldly knowledges [such as sciences, arts and languages], and if one removes the sense of differentiation [*bheda-buddhi*] between Siva [or *Paramatma*] and the soul [or *jivatma*], then only will the true import of Siva *Jnana Bodham* shine forth.

Michael James: The words '*Siva Jnana Bodham'* here give two

meanings; either they can be taken to denote an *Advaitic* text by that name, or they can be taken to mean the knowledge of *Siva*, the supreme reality.

10 The State Transcending the Fourth

(Turiyatita Tiran)

937. In *Jnanis*, who have destroyed the ego, the three states [waking, dream and sleep], which were seen previously, will disappear, and the noble state of *turiya* [the 'fourth'] will itself shine gloriously in them as *turiyatita* [the state transcending the 'fourth'].

938. The state of *turiya*, which is Self, pure *sat-chit*, is itself the non-dual *turiyatita*. Know that the three states are mere [false] appearances, and that Self is the supporting base for them [i.e. the base on which they appear and disappear].

939. Is it not only if the other three states [waking, dream and sleep] were real that wakeful sleep [*jagrat-sushupti*], the pure *Jnana*, would be the fourth? Since those three states are [found to be] unreal in front of *turiya*, that [*turiya*] is the only state; know [therefore] that it [*turiya*] is itself *turiyatita*.

Michael James: The ideas expressed in the above three verses were summarized by Sri Bhagavan in the following verse, which is also verse 32 of *Ulladu Narpadu Anubandham*.

B18. It is only for those who experience waking, dream and sleep that the state of wakeful sleep, which is beyond [those three states] is called *turiya* [the 'fourth']. Since that *turiya* alone really exists and since the seeming three states do not exist, it [*turiya*] is itself *turiyatita*.

Sadhu Om: The word *'turiya'* literally means the 'fourth'. Since only the three states of waking, dream and sleep are under the experience of all people, the state of *Jnana* or wakeful sleep [*jagrat-sushupti*], which is none of these three states, is called the 'fourth' by *sastras*. But Sri Bhagavan asks here, "Why should this state be called the fourth or *turiya* when, at the time of experience of this

state, which is the eternal state of Self-awakening, the other three states [waking, dream and sleep] are found to be truly non-existent?" Then should not this state be considered as the very first? No, it would be wrong even to consider it as the first, because no second state will exist to be experienced after this state, the only real state, is experienced. Therefore, instead of calling it either as the first or as the fourth, it should really be called only '*atita*' [the all-transcending state, *turiyatita*] – such is the *upadesa* given in this verse.

Even the *jiva's* three states of waking, dream and sleep, are not really three; they are only two, namely *sakala* [the state of functioning of the mind] and *kevala* [the state of non-functioning of the mind]. Even these two have only relative reality [*vyavakarika satya*]. In truth, sleep alone is the nature of *turiya* or *turiyatita*. For a fuller explanation of this point, read pages 144 to 145 of *The Path of Sri Ramana* – Part One, 2nd ed. Refer also to verses 460 and 567 of this work, and to the answer to question 9 of chapter 4 of *Upadesa Manjari*.

940. Whether it is called a grand sleep devoid of waking, or a single waking untouched by in-slipping sleep, it will aptly fit the venerable *Jnana-turiya*.

Sadhu Om: This real state may aptly be described in so many different ways such as wakeful sleep, sleepful waking, unwaking sleep, unsleeping waking, birthless death or deathless birth.

11 *Akhanda Vritti*

(Akhanda Vritti Tiran)

941. Since every *vritti* [movement of the mind] is a fragment [*khanda*], the great *Akhanda* [the unfragmented or unbroken reality] is only a state of *nivritti* [a state devoid of movement]. [Therefore] to say that in the supreme state there is *Akhandakara-vritti* [movement in an unbroken form] is like talking of a river in the form of an ocean.

Sadhu Om: In order to suit the poor power of understanding of immature minds, many unfitting terms are used in the scriptures. Sri Bhagavan sometimes used to point out how inapt are some such scriptural terms, including the term *'Akhandakara-vritti'*, which

literally means 'movement [*vritti*] in an unfragmented or unbroken form'. This term is sometimes used to denote the final state of perfect Self-abidance, and is also sometimes used to denote certain practices such as meditation upon the *Mahavakya* 'I am *Brahma*n'. However, Sri Bhagavan reveals in this verse that this term is fitting neither to the state of practice nor to the state of attainment, for the state of practice is a state of *khanda* [fragmentation], while the state of attainment is a state of *nivritti*. In the supreme state of *Akhanda* [non-fragmentation], there can be no room for any movement or *vritti*. When a river merges in the ocean, it loses its separate identity or individuality as a river and becomes one with the ocean; therefore it would be unfitting to call it a 'river in the form of an ocean' [*samudrakara-nadi*]. Likewise, when all *vrittis* [movements of the mind] including the first *vritti*, the *aham-vritti* or 'I'-thought, have merged into the unbroken state of Self-knowledge, they lose their separate identity as *vrittis* and become one with that unbroken state; therefore, instead of calling that unbroken state as mere *'Akhanda'*, it is unfitting to try to retain the term *'vritti'* and to call that state a *'vritti* in an unbroken form' [*akhandakara-vritti*].

12 Severance of the Knot

(Granthi-Bheda Tiran)

942. The state in which the mind does not become heart-broken in pain, in which the mind does not become immersed in pleasure, and in which it remains equally indifferent and peaceful [both in pain and in pleasure], is the sign of *granthi-bheda* [the severance of the knot of identification with the body].

943. Not thinking about what has happened in the past and not thinking about what is to come [in the future], but remaining as an unattached witness even to all that is happening [in the present] and being blissful because of abundant peace, is the sign of *granthi-bheda*.

944. Whatever thoughts may come, their nature is such that they cannot exist without the indispensable Self; therefore, not succumbing to inattentiveness [*pramada*] such as [will make one feel], "Alas, the state of Self [Self-abidance or Self-attention] has been lost on

the way", is also that [i.e. is also the sign of *granthi-bheda*].

Michael James: Even if thoughts should rise, the *Jnani*, (the one in whom the knot or *granthi* has been severed) will know through His unshakeable Self-experience that they cannot exist without Self, and hence any amount of thoughts will not make Him feel that He has lost His hold on Self-attention or Self-abidance. A person who thinks that the waves are different from the ocean will feel on seeing the waves that they are veiling the ocean, whereas a person who knows that the waves are not other than the ocean will never feel so. Similarly, the *ajnani*, who feels thoughts to be other than himself, will feel that thoughts distract his attention from Self, whereas the *Jnani*, who knows that thoughts are not other than Himself (i.e. who knows that thoughts have no independent existence but appear to exist only by depending upon His own existence), will never feel that thoughts have distracted His attention from Self.

13 Having Done What is to be Done

(Krita-Kritya Tiran)

945. Whoever has whatever experiences, wherever and through whatever things, all those experiences are on scrutiny [found to be] nothing but a [reflected] part of Self-experience.

Sadhu Om: All objective experiences are nothing but a false reflection of the one true Self-experience, 'I am'. Refer here to verse 1074 of this work, to the sixth answer in chapter 2 of *Upadesa Manjari*, and to pages 19 to 21 of *The Path of Sri Ramana* – Part Two, 1st ed.

946. Since Self pulls inwards the first thought [the mind], the experiencer [of happiness], drowns it in the heart and does not allow its head to rise. Its form is pure *sukhatita* [that which transcends happiness]; to call It *sukha-swarupa* [the form of happiness] is wrong.

Sadhu Om: That which knows the dyad 'happiness and misery' [*sukha-duhkha*] is only the mind. Self transcends all dyads and is unaffected by them. Since at the time of Self-realization the mind,

which rises to classify 'this is happiness' or 'this is misery', is not allowed to raise its head even in the least but is dragged within and drowned in the ocean of Self-knowledge [in the absolute consciousness, which is mere existence], it would be more fitting to call Self as 'that which transcends happiness' [*sukhatita*] rather than 'the form of happiness' [*sukha-swarupa*].

947. After enquiring and thus knowing that Self as 'I am that [Self which transcends even happiness]', desiring which dual pleasure for whom would that true and great *Jnani* get mental craving?

Sri Muruganar: Since He [the *Jnani*] is truly Self, the unbroken bliss [*akhanda-ananda*], and since neither any happiness nor any *jiva* exists apart from Himself, it is said "desiring which dual pleasure for whom", and since no pain will appear without desire, it is said "desiring what would He get mental craving".

948. Vedic injunctions which say, "You have to do this", are not applicable to true *Jnanis*, in whom the dark delusion of doership is dead. The reason why it is said [in the '*Karma Kanda*' of the *Vedas*] that even *Jnanis* have to perform so many *karmas*, is only to protect the *vaidika dharma* [and not to compel *Jnanis* to perform *karmas*].

Michael James: Some schools of thought believe that even *Jnanis* have to do some good actions (*karmas*), for example, that they should perform sacrifices (*yajnas*) for the welfare of the world, or that they should assist God in governing the universe. Such things are also said in the '*Karma Kanda'* (that portion of the *Vedas* which teaches ritualistic actions for the fulfilment of desires), but they are said only in order to pacify the minds of ignorant people and to encourage them to follow the path of *karmas* so that indiscipline will not flourish in society. However, since a *Jnani* is devoid of any sense of doership, it is only in the outlook of *ajnanis* that He may sometimes appear to be performing such good *karmas*. When Sri Bhagavan was asked by immature devotees whether *Jnanis* have to choose to do some kind of work or *karma*, even He sometimes used to reply, "Yes, some *Jnanis* may take up work [*karma*], but not all" (see *Maharshi's Gospel*, Book One, ch.7, p. 39); however,

He gave such replies only to suit the immature understanding of such devotees and to pacify their minds.

949. Since there is nothing to be attained beyond what they have already attained, for the egoless *Sukha-titars* [those who have transcended happiness] there is nothing further to do. Since such is their nature, they alone are those who have reached the goal, having done [all that is to be done].

Sadhu Om: Compare here verse 15 of *Upadesa Undiyar*, "For the great Yogi who has attained the reality, having destroyed his mind-form, there is no single action [remaining to be done] ...," and verse 31 of *Ulladu Narpadu*, "What single thing remains for Him to do who thus enjoys the bliss of Self, which has risen on the destruction of himself [the mind or ego]...".

Sri Muruganar: The state of egolessness alone is pure silence; it alone is what is called 'that which transcends happiness' [*ananda-tita*] and 'that which transcends the fourth' [*turiyatita*]. Since for those who have attained that state, which is *paratpara* [the highest of the high], there is no further state which can be attained by effort, they alone are called 'those who have done what is to be done' [*krita-krityars*]. "Can a full pot contain any more water? [Similarly] how and for what can those who have attained the well-established Silence make effort?" sings Tayumanuvar.

950. If one subsides without one's own effort in *Sadasiva*, one's own Self, as Self itself, then one will remain in peaceful bliss as one who has already done everything and who has nothing further to do.

951. Will those *Jnanis*, who have gained the plenitude of Self-experience, know anything other [than Self]? How can the deluded and limited mind imagine their supreme bliss, which transcends the seeming duality [of happiness and misery]?

Sadhu Om: Compare here verse 31 of *Ulladu Narpadu*, "... Since He [the *Jnani*] does not know anything other than Self, who can and how to conceive what His state is?" It is impossible to determine the state of a *Jnani*, and it is wrong to try to do so. Their expe-

rience of supreme bliss, which is *sukhatita* [transcending even happiness], cannot be measured even by people having very sharp intellects, because, how is it possible for the mind to judge a state of bliss which will shine only after the destruction of the mind?

14 The Non-Existence of Misery

(Dukha-Abhava Tiran)

952. One's own reality [Self], which shines within everyone as Heart, is the ocean of unalloyed bliss. Therefore misery, which is unreal like the blueness of the sky, truly does not exist except in mere imagination.

Sadhu Om: In this chapter the truth proclaimed by the Sage Appar, namely, "Bliss alone exists, misery is ever non-existent", is well expounded. That which really exists is only bliss, our real nature. In the past, present and future there never has been and there never will be such thing as 'misery' at all. The dyad 'pleasure and pain' is an illusion or imagination which seems to exist only because of the defective outlook of the ego, the rising of which is itself unreal. Therefore misery can only be as real as the ego. Since the ego or *jiva* is a false appearance which has no real existence, the miseries which appear in the defective outlook of the ego are also a false appearance, like the appearance of the blue colour seen in the colourless sky.

953. Since one's own reality, the sun of *Jnana* which has never seen the darkness of delusion, itself shines as happiness, the confusion of misery appears only because of the unreal sense of individuality [*jiva-bodha*]; but in truth no one has [ever] undergone any such thing [as 'misery'].

Sadhu Om: Suppose a man who is sleeping happily, having taken a full meal, dreams that he is a wandering about suffering from hunger. When he wakes up, will he not realize that the hunger and misery which he experienced in dream are in truth unreal and non-existent? Likewise, when one wakes up from the sleep of Self-forgetfulness, in which the dream of one's present life is occurring, one will realize that all the miseries that one experienced as a *jiva* are in truth unreal and non-existent [see verse 1 of *Ekatma Panchakam*]. Refer also to the example given by Sri Bhagavan in

verse 30 of *Ulladu Narpadu Anubandham*, "... though lying motionless here [on his bed], [a man in dream] climbs up a hill and falls into a precipice". The teaching of Sri Bhagavan is that misery is unreal, being merely mental.

Throughout this chapter Sri Bhagavan expounds the truth that misery is non-existent in order to strengthen the *titiksha* [the forbearance or ability to endure misery] in aspirants, lest they should become disheartened and give up their *sadhana* on account of the various miseries which occur in their life.

954. If [through the enquiry 'Who am I?'] one scrutinizes [and knows] one's own Self, which is auspicious bliss, there will be no misery at all in one's life. It is due to one's having a wicked delusion that one suffers through the notion that the body, which is never oneself, is 'I'.

955. Those who do not know themselves to be the one [non-dual] Self will perish daily, vainly suffering in fear [because of seeing the world as something other than themselves]. [Therefore] destroying the notion 'I am the body', the root [of all misery], by gaining [through the enquiry 'Who am I?'] the firm knowledge of your real Self, attain the state of non-duality [*advaita*].

956. If one clings only to the knowledge [of one's own Self] as the real refuge, then the misery of birth [or the birth of misery], which is caused by ignorance, will come to an end.

15 The Pervasiveness of Sleep

(Sushupti Vyapaka Tiran)

957. Do not be disheartened and lose your mental vigour thinking that [the state of experiencing] sleep in dream has not yet been obtained. If the strength of [experiencing] sleep in the present waking state is obtained, then [the state of experiencing] sleep in dream will also be obtained.

Sadhu Om: The words 'sleep in the present waking state' [a*navum nanavil sushupti*] denote the state of wakeful sleep [*jagrat-sushupti*]

or *turiya*, the state of experiencing no differences during waking. In order to attain this state, aspirants have to make efforts in the waking state. However, some aspirants used to ask Sri Bhagavan, "Do we also have to make such efforts in dream, so that we may attain the state of experiencing no differences even during dream?" This doubt is answered by Sri Bhagavan in this verse.

The feeling 'I am this body' [*dehatma-buddhi*] rises in the subtle body during dream only because of the habit of identifying the gross body as 'I' during waking. Hence, if one practices Self-enquiry in the waking state and thereby eradicates the *dehatma-buddhi* [the habit of thus identifying a body as 'I'] in this state, that itself will be sufficient to eradicate the *dehatma-buddhi* in dream also. Therefore Sri Bhagavan advises in the next verse that, until the *dehatma-buddhi* is completely eradicated even in dream, one should not give up Self-enquiry in the waking state. Refer here to the fourth paragraph of the first chapter of *Vichara Sangraham* where Sri Bhagavan says, "All the three bodies [gross, subtle and causal] consisting of the five sheaths are included in the feeling 'I am the body'. If that one [i.e. the identification with the gross body] is removed, all [i.e. the identification with the other two bodies] will automatically be removed. Since [the identification with] the other bodies [the subtle and causal] survive only by depending upon this [the identification with the gross body], there is no need to remove them one by one."

The words *'kanavil sushupti'* [sleep in dream], which are used in the first and last lines of this verse, may also be taken to mean 'sleep without dream', in which case the following alternative meaning can be given: "Do not be disheartened and lose your mental vigour thinking that sleep without dream has not yet been obtained. If the strength of [experiencing] sleep in the present waking state is obtained, then sleep without dream will also be obtained."

958. Until the state of sleep in waking [i.e. the state of wakeful sleep or *jagrat-sushupti*] is attained, Self-enquiry should not be given up. Moreover until sleep in dream is also attained, it is essential to persist in that enquiry [i.e. to continue trying to cling to the mere feeling 'I'].

Michael James: The ideas in the above two verses were summarized by Sri Bhagavan in the following verse.

B19. The state of sleep in waking [or *jagrat-sushupti*] will result by constant scrutinizing enquiry into oneself. Until sleep pervades and shines in waking and in dream, do that enquiry continuously.

16 Conscious Sleep

(Arituyil Tiran)

959. O men who, caught by the dangerous snares of the world and struck by the sharp arrows of cruel miseries, are suffering greatly and are wandering in search of the attainment of supreme bliss, the sleep in which there is no loss of consciousness [i.e. wakeful sleep or *jagrat-sushupti*] alone is the imperishable happiness.

Sadhu Om: 'The sleep in which there is no loss of consciousness' [*arivu-azhiya tukkam*] means only the state of Self-knowledge. Here consciousness [*arivu*] means *prajna* or the knowledge of one's own existence, and not the knowledge of other things. That which knows other things is not true knowledge [see *Ulladu Narpadu* verse 12]. The state we call sleep is the state in which we know no other things, not even the body. The state we call waking is the state in which, along with the knowledge of one's own existence ['I am'], there is also knowledge of other things. The state in which we remain conscious merely of our own existence, like in waking, but in which the mind [the knower of other things] does not rise, like in sleep, is called the state of conscious sleep or wakeful sleep. Since no other thing is known in this state, it is a sleep; and since one's own existence is shining clearly there, it is a state of consciousness or waking.

960. Those who are sleeping, having given up the habit of [going out through] the deceitful senses and having become established in the heart-lotus, are those who are awake in the abode of real knowledge [*mey-jnana*]. Others are those who are asleep, being immersed in the dense darkness of this unreal world [*poy-jnala*].

17 Non-Dual Knowledge

(Advaita Jnana Tiran)

961. When the 'I' has died by *Sivaya Namah* [complete obeisance to Lord Siva] and is burning in the fire of unobstructed and blazing devotion [*bhakti*], then in the flame of Self-experience will shine the true clarity of the unfailing *Sivoham* [the experience 'I am Siva'].

Sadhu Om: *'Sivoham'* is the final state of experience which results from the death of the ego. But the ego will never die by merely doing *japa* of or meditating *'Sivoham, Sivoham'* [I am Siva, I am Siva]. In order to make the ego die, the practice of *'Sivaya Namah'* [complete obeisance to Lord Siva, the Supreme Reality] is necessary. And in order to make the ego do obeisance [i.e. surrender itself] to Lord Siva, one must attend to its source and thereby prevent it from rising [see *Ulladu Narpadu* verse 27, "The state in which 'I' does not rise, is the state 'We are That'. Unless one scrutinizes the source whence 'I' rises, how to attain the state of egolessness, in which 'I' does not rise?..."]. Therefore Self-enquiry, the true practice of '*Sivaya Namah'*, alone is the *sadhana* which will destroy the ego and thereby bring about the true experience of *'Sivoham'*.

962. Know that the bright light of fire that rises within, kindled by more and more inwardly grinding the mind, which has been made free from impurities, on the stone of heart through [the enquiry] 'Who am I?', is the true knowledge "*Ana'l-Haq*" [I am the reality].

Sadhu Om: The idea expressed in verse 341 of this work should be noted here. If a religion is a true one, at least one sacred utterance of *Mahavakya* which reveals the transcendent nature of Self, should be found in its scriptures. If such a *Mahavakya* were not found in its scriptures, it would not be a true religion. For example, Sri Bhagavan used to point out the peerless *Mahavakya* 'I am that I am' which is revealed in the Holy Bible. In the same manner, He also used to point out the sacred utterance *'Ana'l-Haq'* in the Islamic Religion *al-Haq* is one of the 99 names of Allah, and means 'the reality' or 'the truth'; "*Ana'l-Haq*" means 'I am the reality', and is a sacred utterance made by Hallaj, a famous Sufi Sage]. Sri

Bhagavan used to explain that the final aim of all these religions is to make one know the Self. [Refer also to verse 663.]

963. Only steadfastness in non-dual knowledge [*advaita jnana*] is heroism. On the other hand, even conquest over [one's] enemies is, on scrutiny, [found to be due not to heroism but only to] great fear possessing the mind, which is shaken by the hubbub of the unreal world of duality. Know thus.

Sadhu Om: Only when a thing is felt to be other than oneself, will a fear of it or a desire for it arise in one. Since no other thing exists in the non-dual state of Self-knowledge, there can arise no fear or desire in that state, and hence it alone is the state of true fearlessness or heroism. Even if by one's own strength one is able to conquer and subdue all one's powerful enemies, one cannot be said to possess real heroism, for one tries to conquer them only because of the fear that they may do harm to one. Fear is the sole cause which impels one to conquer one's enemies, and knowledge of duality is the sole cause for fear. Only the *Jnani*, who has the experience of non-duality, has no fear, because nothing whatsoever exists as other than Himself, and thus He alone is truly the great hero [*maha-dhira*].

964. Only that [state] which is devoid of the differences created by the ego, the dense and great delusion, is the realization of Oneness [*Kaivalya-darsanam*]. That piercing, all-transcendent, silent and divine supreme consciousness is the Supreme Abode [*param-dhana*] experienced by the great Sages.

18 Divine Grace

(Tiruvarul Tiran)

965. If you, thinking of Him [God or Guru], take one step [towards Him], in response to that, more [graciously] than even a mother, that Lord, thinking of you, will Himself come nine steps [towards you] and receive [you]. See, such is His Grace!

966. When divine Grace is only the reality which shines [in the heart of every *jiva*] as 'am' [*ullam*], the blame of disregarding [or being ungracious towards] the real-

> **ity will be fitting only to the *jivas* who do not think of it [i.e. who do not attend to that reality which shines as 'I am'] melting inwardly [with love]; how, on the contrary, can the blame of not bestowing sweet Grace be fitting to that reality?**

Sadhu Om: The first person consciousness *'am'* is the experience of everyone. This consciousness of our existence exists in us only because God resides within us as Self due to His unaccountable Grace. Thus God is always bestowing His Grace on everyone in the form of the consciousness 'am'. Since the shining of this consciousness 'am' is the greatest aid enabling *jivas* to attain God and thus be saved, this consciousness itself is here said to be the divine Grace of God. Therefore, it is wrong for *jivas* to accuse God of being ungracious towards them. On the contrary, since *jivas* never attend to Self, the existence-consciousness which shines as 'I am', but always attend only to second and third persons, it is not God by only the *jivas* who are to be accused of being ungracious.

Sri Muruganar: Since, in order that *jivas* should not have even the least difficulty in knowing and attaining Him, God exists and shines due to His infinite Grace in each and every *jiva*, not as another but only as Self, the reality of those *jivas*, it is said, "Divine Grace is only the reality which shines as 'am'"; since God is unceasingly bestowing Grace by always shining in the hearts of all *jivas* day and night in the form of the continuous shining of 'I-I', it is said, "How can the blame of not bestowing sweet Grace be fitting to that reality?"; since, unless the *jivas* turn within towards Him and attend to Him, they cannot understand the truth that God is ever bestowing Grace upon them, and since it is thus a great wrong for *jivas* who do not attend to Him, whose very nature is Grace, to accuse Him of not at all bestowing Grace upon them, it is said, "The blame of disregarding the reality will be fitting only to the *jivas* who do not think of it, melting inwardly". Since, just as the one reality, the Self, which exists and shines as one without a second in the heart, itself [seemingly] exists as many, so in all *jivas*, who are [seemingly] many because of the adjuncts [*upadhis*], it [seemingly] shines individually as 'I-I', know that the first person plural verb *'ullam'* [a contracted form of *'ullom'*] is fittingly used here. Since the heart [*hridayam*] is called *'ullam'* in Tamil because it is the place where that [Self] thus exists and shines, this word *'ullam'* is used here with

a double meaning [namely ‘am’ and ‘heart’], and hence both meanings can be taken here.

967. Although the existence-consciousness [*sat-chit*] that shines abundantly in the [state of] abidance – in which the mind has turned inwards [through the enquiry ‘Who am I?’] and the ego has [thereby] subsided – is devoid of characteristics and qualities and is beyond the mind, it appears as Guru, [having characteristics such as name and form]. [Such is] the Grace of God, who is Self.

Sadhu Om: In this verse it is clearly taught that Self alone is the Guru, Self alone is God and Self alone is Grace. Although Self, which is God, has no characteristic [*kuri*] or quality [*guna*], because of Its abundant Grace towards the devotees, It assumes characteristics and qualities and appears in the form of a Guru in order to save them. Thus Grace, God, Guru and Self are one and the same.

968. The ‘I’ of [those] true devotees who have seen the form [or nature] of Grace, will shine as the form of the supreme reality, since the ego, the unreal *chit-jada-granthi* [the knot between the conscious Self and the insentient body] which creates the delusive mental agonies, has died and no longer rises in the heart.

Sadhu Om: The phrase ‘the true devotees who have seen the form [or nature] of Grace’ [*arul vannam kanda mey anbar*] may be taken to mean either (1) those true devotees who have seen the *Sadguru*, who is the embodiment of Grace [as explained in the previous verse], or (2) those true devotees who have realized Self, the true nature of Grace, through Self-enquiry.

969. [Since, as explained in verse 966, the Lord is always and everywhere bestowing His Grace upon everyone by shining in them as ‘I am’] *jivas* stand immersed in the ambrosial flood of Grace; [when it is so, their] being deluded and suffering through illusion is foolishness, [just like one’s] dying [because of] not knowing how to quench [one’s] thirst [even though

one is] standing in the midst of the flood of water of the rushing river Ganga.

Michael James: One who is standing neck-deep in the flooding water of the Ganga need only bend down in order to drink and quench his thirst. Likewise, since God or Guru is always bestowing His Grace upon us by shining within us as 'I am', we need only turn our attention within towards that 'I am' in order to drink and quench our thirst for His Grace.

970. Why does the impartial God, who bestows [His] gracious glance upon one and all, discard wicked people? The [divine] eye which surges as everything, does not discard anyone; [it is only because of] the delusion of their dim, defective outlook [that it seems to reject some people].

Sadhu Om: The Tamil word *'kan'*, which means 'eye', is also sometimes used to mean 'true knowledge' or *'jnana'*. Therefore the words 'the eye that surges as everything' [*ellamay pongum kan*] also mean the knowledge 'I am' which shines as everything. Since the knowledge 'I am' is shining in everyone as the true form of Grace, it can never be said that the Eye of Grace is rejecting anyone.

If we are to say, "So-and-so has not seen me," can we not do so only after looking for that person? Similarly, if we are to accuse God of not bestowing His gracious glance upon us, can we not do so only after we have turned within and looked at Him, the Self-consciousness which shines within us as 'I am'? Therefore, when we never attend to Self but always remain extroverted, we cannot justly accuse God of not bestowing His Grace upon us. "Turning inwards, daily see yourself with an introverted look and it will be known [that He is ever bestowing His Grace] ... ," sings Sri Bhagavan in verse 44 of *Sri Arunachala Aksharamanamalai*. The extroverted look of ignorant people who never turn inwards, is describe in the present verse as "the delusion of their dim defective outlook" [*avar mangun kan malai mayakku*].

Sri Muruganar: When God resides within every *jiva* as Self and unceasingly always knows all of them as Himself, unless the *jivas* know Him they cannot know the fact that God is bestowing His

Grace upon them; therefore it is said “the delusion of their dim, defective outlook”.

19 Existence-Consciousness-Bliss

(Sat-Chit-Ananda Tiran)

971. When, by changing [its direction, i.e. by turning Selfwards], the deluded knowledge, the intellect [*buddhi*] which knows other things, reaches [and merges in] the Heart [Self], which is pure existence, that existence-consciousness-bliss [*mey-arivu-ananda*] will be attained.

972. When [all its] mischiefs [or movements] subside, the mind [*chittam*], which is [in its real nature] consciousness [*chit*], will itself see itself as the reality [*sat*]. [When thus] the *chit-sakti* [the power of consciousness or power of knowing] becomes one with the reality [*sat*], what is the [resulting] dense supreme bliss [*paramananda*], the remaining one [of the three aspects of *Brahman*], other than that Self?

Sadhu Om: Knowing [*chit*] oneself to be the reality [*sat*] is bliss [*ananda*]. Knowing oneself, the Self, to be the body is the deluded knowledge which is called ‘mind’ [*chittam*]. It is only because of this wrong knowledge that such a thing as ‘misery’ appears to come into existence. However, when one knows oneself to be Self [atman], since the *chittam* then loses its nature of movement and attains the nature of consciousness [*chit-rupa*], it knows itself to be the reality [*sat*]. Since this union of *sat* and *chit* is the fullness of *ananda*, misery will be known to be ever non-existent and the truth that Self alone is *sat*, *chit* and *ananda* will shine forth. The state of supreme bliss [*paramananda*] which is experienced when the power of consciousness [*chit-sakti*] and the Lord [Siva] whose nature is existence [*sat*] thus become one, is the true significance of the form of Ardhanariswara [the Lord who is both Siva and Sakti].

973. When the insentient ego, the *jiva* which is *chit-jada* [a combination of consciousness and the insentient], dies, he will shine as the nature of consciousness [*chit-swarupa*]. Since the nature of consciousness

remains there [in that state] as existence [*sat*] alone, the bliss [experienced there] is ever Self alone.

Sadhu Om: The ego or *jiva* is a wrong knowledge which acts as a false knot linking together Self, which is consciousness [*Chit*], and the body, which is insentient [*jada*]. When this ego dies, i.e. when its wrong identification with the insentient body is destroyed through Self-enquiry, its nature of insentience [*jada-swarupa*] alone is removed and thus it remains shining as the very nature of consciousness [*chit-swarupa*]. Since there can be no existence other than this consciousness, this consciousness [*chit*] itself remains as the single mere existence [*sat*], which is Self. Since that state is a state of non-duality, the bliss experience there is also nothing but Self itself. Thus the knowledge [*chit*] of Self, one's own existence [*sat*], is itself bliss [*ananda*].

Sri Muruganar: The death of the insentient ego is the severing of the *chit-jada-granthi* [the knot between consciousness and the insentient body]. Severing the *chit-jada-granthi* means separating through Self-enquiry the body and Self, which were joined together through ignorance [*avidya*]. "The Lord of the Mount danced and [thereby] separated the body and Self," sings Sri Sundaramurti Nayanar. Here [in the present verse], the fruit of the severance of the knot [*granthi-bheda*] is described as "the bliss [which is] Self alone" [*tan-mattira-inbam*], and the nature of consciousness, which results from that [the severance of the knot], is described as "existence alone" [*sat-mattiram*].

974. Not forgetting consciousness [i.e. not forgetting one's own Self-consciousness due to *pramada* or inattentiveness] is the path of devotion [*bhakti*], the relationship of unfading real love, because the real consciousness of Self, which shines as the undivided [non-dual] supreme bliss itself, surges as the nature of love [or *bhakti*].

Sadhu Om: The true knowledge of Self, which always shines naturally, is the fullness of non-dual bliss [*ananda*], because it shines as the truth of love. Existence [*sat*], consciousness [*chit*] and bliss [*ananda*] are not really three, but one and the same. We should know that being conscious [*chit*] of our own existence [*sat*] is itself

bliss [*ananda*]. Verse 979 should be referred to here. The love for oneself shines in all *jivas* because self-love is the very nature of Self. Therefore, since love is the nature of Self, and since Self is the very form of supreme happiness, it is wrong to regard happiness as being the result of love; instead of thus regarding love and happiness as being cause and effect, we should understand that love is itself happiness. Since by loving Self one knows Self and by knowing Self one loves Self, we should also understand that love is itself happiness. Since by loving Self one knows Self and by knowing Self one loves Self, we should also understand that knowledge itself is love, which is happiness. Since Self is one's own existence or being, it can never become an object to be known, and hence knowing Self is nothing but being Self; thus we should understand that being [*Sat*] itself is knowledge [*Chit*], which is both happiness [*ananda*] and love [*priyam*]. Therefore, the true knowledge 'We, the form of love or happiness, alone exist' is the state of perfect, non-dual bliss [*ananda*].

975. When the fleshy ego-defect, the efficient cause [of the seeming existence of the world-appearance], which is [itself] non-existent, has been destroyed, that state [of Self] is the one existence [*sat*] which was lying [as a supporting base] for all the worlds that appeared to exist, being dependent on It [for their apparent existence].

Sadhu Om: The ego is here described as impermanent, unreal and fleshy because it identifies the impermanent, unreal and fleshy body as 'I'. Since the ego is unreal [*asat*], the names and forms of the world, which are seen only by the ego, are also unreal. However, the ego seems to be real because it is a mixture of the unreal name and form of the body and the real consciousness of Self. Therefore it is Self, the real aspect of the ego, which makes the unreal names and forms of the world appear to be real. Thus Self is the sole reality of this seeming world-appearance.

976. When the mad ego-delusion, the one *jiva*, which is [itself] insentient has been cast off, that state [of Self] is the one consciousness [*chit*] which was lying [as a supporting base] for all the *jivas*, which appeared as

if having sentience, to know [i.e. to be seemingly sentient and to know other objects].

977. When the miserable ego-pride, which is the one cause [of all suffering] and which is [itself] unhappiness, has been destroyed, that state [of Self] is the bliss [*ananda*] which was lying [as a supporting base] for all objective pleasures, which appeared as if having happiness, to be experienced [as seemingly pleasurable].

Sadhu Om: The ego is here described as the pride which causes all misery because it proudly identifies the body, which is completely devoid of happiness, as 'I'

The above three verses, 975 to 977, should all be read and reflected over together. Does not this world appear as if it were an ever-existing reality [*sat*], do not all *jivas* in the world appear as if they were sentient [*chit*], and do not all the objects in the world appear as if they were giving happiness [*ananda*] to us? The secret behind all this is revealed in these verses.

The body is impermanent [and hence unreal or *asat*], insentient [*jada*] and the source of all miseries such as disease and so on, whereas the consciousness 'I' is the shining of *sat-chit-ananda*. The wrong knowledge which identifies this body as 'I' is the ego. It is only during the time of the ego's functioning and only in the outlook of the ego, which thus mistakes the unreal, insentient and miserable body as being real, sentient and a source of happiness [that is, as being *sat-chit-ananda*], that this world appears to be real [*sat*], the living beings in it appear to be sentient [*chit*] and the objects in it appear to be a source of happiness [*ananda*]. These three verses thus clearly assert that the ego is the sole cause which makes the names and forms [*nama-rupa*, the two unreal aspects of *Brahman*] appear as if they were real, sentient and a source of happiness [*sat-chit-ananda*, the three real aspects of *Brahman*]. To impose existence [*sat*], consciousness [*chit*] and happiness [*ananda*], which are real, upon the names and forms, which are unreal, and thereby to see those names and forms as real, is the wrong outlook [*dosha-drishti*] of the ego. When this ego is destroyed through Self-enquiry, the apparent *sat-chit-ananda* imposed upon the world will disappear, and the real *sat-chit-ananda*,

which is Self, the base or support of the world-appearance, alone will shine. Only when the ego is thus destroyed, will the truth be known that it was only because of the existence [*sat*] of Self that the names and forms of the world appeared as if they were really having existence, that it was only because of the consciousness [*chit*] of Self that the names and forms of the world appeared as if they were really having consciousness, and that it was only became of the happiness [*ananda*] of Self that the names and forms of the world appeared as if they were really giving happiness.

Not only do these verses reveal this profound truth, but they do so in a very beautiful manner. The first and last words of each verse denote respectively *sat*, *chit* and *ananda*. In the first verse the ego is described as being unreal, defective and fleshy [in contrast to reality or *sat*], in the second verse it is described as being insentient, deluded and mad [in contrast to consciousness or *Chit*], and in the third verse it is described as being miserable, proud and devoid of happiness [in contrast to bliss or *ananda*]. Many other points of literary and linguistic beauty can be pointed out in these three verses, all of which help to emphasise the profound truth revealed in them.

978. Those who say, "If they abide as the supreme reality, the form of bliss [*sukha-swarupa*], for them there can be no experience of bliss," are those who [thereby] argue and assert that the form of bliss [i.e. the supreme reality, which is *sat-chit-ananda*] is merely an insentient object like sugar.

Sadhu Om: In the intoxication of dualistic devotion some people used to say, "I do not like to become sugar itself; I prefer to remain like an ant sitting by the side of the sugar to taste its sweetness". That is to say, there is a wrong belief among some devotees that the state of non-duality [*advaita*] in which one merges in and becomes one with *Brahman* will be a dry and empty state devoid of bliss [*ananda*]. Only those who have not achieved the experience of perfect devotion [*sampurna-bhakti*] can believe or speak like this. Refer to page 152 of *The Path of Sri Ramana* – Part Two, where it is explained that the perfect devotee [*sampurna-bhaktiman*] is only he who has 'otherless love' [*ananya-priti*].

Sugar is an insentient object [*jada-vastu*], while an ant is

sentient and is thereby able to enjoy the sweetness of sugar. But *Brahman* is not like this; It is not an insentient object like sugar. *Brahman*, which is the reality [*sat*], is also consciousness [*chit*] and is thereby able to know itself. Since *Brahman* is also bliss [*ananda*], which is the very nature of consciousness [*chit-swabhava*], no other sentient object [*chit-vastu*] is needed to experience the bliss of *Brahman*. Therefore it is foolish to compare Self, which is not only bliss but also the consciousness which knows bliss, to an insentient object like sugar.

It is completely wrong to say, as some people do, that this comparison was taught by Sri Ramakrishna. Sri Ramakrishna, who had the perfect experience of *sat-chit-ananda*, would never have thus compared *Brahman* to an insentient object like sugar. When people say that Sri Ramakrishna thus used to compare *Brahman* to sugar, we have to doubt the accuracy of the recording of His teachings.

979. Though existence [*sat*], consciousness [*chit*] and bliss [*ananda*] are spoken of as [though they were] different, when actually experienced these three are [found to be] one [namely 'I', the Self] just as the harmonious three qualities, liquidity, sweetness and coolness, are [in substance] only the one water.

20 The Greatness of the Reality

(Unmai Matchi Tiran)

980. Existence [literally, to be that which exists] is the nature of Self. All things other than that one [the Self] are a multitude of false imaginations [*kalpanas*] and cannot [really] exist. All of them will go away from Self, but this one [the Self] will never go away [i.e. will never become non-existent].

Sadhu Om: The word 'existence' [*uladadal*] here denotes our true existence-consciousness [the feeling of our being] which is devoid of body and mind. Though the mind, body and world, being unreal, disappear during sleep, death and dissolution, we [Self or *Brahman*] alone are that which shines as the indestructible existence-consciousness.

981. He [i.e. Self] who exists as the form of conscious-

ness, will not become non-existent. If one remains devoid of other knowledges, [that is] if the deceptive, unreal and dual imaginations [superimposed] on consciousness are removed, for oneself who [thus] exists as [mere] consciousness there will be no destruction.

Sadhu Om: Only those things which are known by the mind as objects are liable to be destroyed, whereas we, who are existence-consciousness, can never be destroyed. Since the pure consciousness 'I am' shines even after the ego, the knower of objects, has been destroyed, there can never be destruction for us.

982. Self, the Whole [*paripurnam*], will appear as if completely non-existent [*sunya*] to those who have *pramada* [inattentiveness to Self], which murders Self [and which comes into existence] when the 'I' rises [even] a little due to superimposition [of adjuncts or *upadhis*] upon one's own supreme Self, which is the supreme Reality.

Michael James: *Pramada* or inattentiveness to Self, one's own being, comes into existence only when the ego, the unreal feeling 'I am so-and-so', rises due to superimposition of the adjunct [*upadhi*] 'so-and-so' upon the pure consciousness 'I am'. Since the superimposition of this adjunct veils the true nature of Self, the pure 'I am', and makes it appear as if non-existent, *pramada* is said to murder Self.

Sri Muruganar: Since the thought 'I' alone is the ego, when it rises [even] a little, bondage comes into existence due to the 'I am the body' feeling [*dehatma-buddhi*], and hence the ignorance [*ajnana*] known as *pramada*, which is a slipping down from [abidance as] Self, is born. Know that in truth this alone is the sin of murdering *Brahman* [*brahma-hatja dosha*]. For those bound *jivas* who are thus under the sway of *pramada*, the Whole will seem to be a state which cannot be known, and [thus] it will appear as if non-existent [*sunya*].

983. He who knows himself to be the great one, the real state [of Self], instead of wrongly knowing himself to be the one who sees objects outside, will attain the

state of fullness of peace, having lost through [proper discrimination] the desire for all the eightfold *siddhis*.

Sadhu Om: This verse can also be read along with verses 645 to 649 in the chapter 'The Severance of Objective Attention'.

Only those people who are deluded into thinking that objects exist outside and are real, will consider that the eightfold occult powers [*ashta-siddhis*] are wonderful and worthy to achieve. But one who knows himself to be Self, the existence-consciousness, and who has thereby given up objective knowledge, will understand the worthlessness and unreality of all *siddhis*, and hence he will reject them as trivial and will remain in the bliss of Self, the sole reality.

984. The powerful One who [always] clings to the reality will never be afraid, due to mental delusion, of anything at all.

Sadhu Om: A feeling of fear can arise in one only so long as one is deluded into thinking that there really exists anything other than oneself. But the Hero who has attained the strength of Self-abidance [*nishta-bala*] has the firm, unshakeable experience that He, the reality, alone exists. Therefore, since no other thing exists in His outlook, neither fear nor confusion can arise for Him.

21 All is *Brahman*

(Sarvam Brahma Tiran)

985. It is only Self, the one pure knowledge, that, as the unreal knowledge [the mind], makes all differences [*vikalpas*] appear. [Therefore] for the one who knows and reaches Self, which is the harmonious knowledge, all those other things [the entire world-appearance] will be [found to be] of the nature of the one Self.

Michael James: All differences such as name and form, time and space, subject and object, are made to appear only by the mind, which is truly non-existent, being nothing but an unreal appearance in the real Self. Just as when the real rope is seen, the unreal and non-existent snake is found to be nothing but that rope, so when

the real Self is known, the unreal and non-existent mind and all its products (the entire world-appearance) are found to be nothing but that Self. It is only in this sense that the unreal world-appearance is said to be of the nature of the one Self or *Brahman*.

986. Only the ever-existing Self, other than which nothing exists and from which nothing is different, is the sole reality. All that is known in that Siva [that sole reality], who is the Supreme which exists and shines as *sat-chit*, is only that Supreme and nothing else.

987. Whether real or unreal, whether knowledge or ignorance gathered by the intellect, whether pleasant or unpleasant to the mind, all are only *Brahman* and nothing else.

988. Faith [*shraddha*], faithlessness [*asraddha*], thought [*chinta*], thoughtfreeness [*achinta*], desirelessness [*virakti*], non-desirelessness [*avirakti*], knowable [*vedam*], unknowable [*avedam*], eminence [*varam*], baseness [*avaram*], laudable [*vaniyam*], despicable [*avanidyam*] – all are only *Brahman* and nothing else.

Sadhu Om: The four verses in this chapter all emphasize that Self or *Brahman* is the sole existing reality. We should understand that all the dyads or pairs of opposites mentioned in these verses are in truth non-existent and that the one *Brahman* alone exists [see note to verse 985]. We should not take these verses to mean that, since even the dyads are only *Brahman*, the dual outlook is appreciated, or to mean that there is no wrong in one's being immersed in those dyads.

22 Harmony Among Religions

(Samarasa Tiran)

989. Since Silence, the summit of knowledge, is the common nature [of each and every religion], all religions [*matas*] are agreeable as a means to true *Advaita*, which shines unique and pure, and [hence] they are not opposed to the wonderful *Vedanta*.

Sadhu Om: Whatever knowledge is proclaimed by whatever religion to be the final goal or achievement, since Silence alone is the

limit or boundary of all knowledge, the final knowledge of each of those religions is contained in Silence. Since *Advaita Vedanta* is a common principle having Silence as its goal, each and every religion is a means and is agreeable to *Vedanta*. Refer here to verses 1176 to 1179, 1235 and 1242.

990. Even though [some] narrow and mean-minded people invent a different religion due to enmity [with the already existing religions], know that even that religion is acceptable to Siva, who shines as the form of the undivided knowledge.

991. In whichever religion you have faith, follow that religion with true love, turning inwards instead of outwardly arguing against other religions due to attachment [*abhimani*] to your own religion.

Michael James: All kinds of attachment [*abhimani*], including even the attachment to one's own religion [*matabhimana*], are rooted only in the ego, the *dehabhimana* or attachment towards one's own body as 'I'. Therefore, if, due to one's attachment to one's own religion, one turns one's attention outwards to argue against other religions, one will only be strengthening one's *dehabhimana* or sense of identification with the body. Since the ultimate aim of all religions is to destroy the *dehabhimana*, one should turn within and know one's true nature, thereby rooting out the ego.

992. It is best to give up the various arguments about duality [*dvaita*], qualified non-duality [*visishtadvaita*] and pure non-duality [*suddhadvaita*], and instead think of and worship God with ripening love [*tapas*] in order to attain the wealth of divine Grace, and [thereby] to know the reality.

993. Religion [*mata*] will exist only so long as mind [*mati*] exists. After it [the mind] has merged into the heart by turning within and scrutinizing that mind [by enquiring 'Who am I, this mind?'], in [that] abundantly peaceful Silence no such religion can stand.

Michael James: In Sanskrit and Tamil religion is called *'mata'* because it can exist only within the realm of the mind (*mati*). Therefore, when the mind merges in Self, the state of Supreme Silence,

through the enquiry 'Who am I?', no religion can remain. Thus aspirants should understand that all the differences and controversies created by the various different religions exist only in the mind, and that those differences and controversies can be resolved only by the mind's turning inwards and merging into Self, the reality or Silence which is (as revealed in verse 989) the common and harmonious factor in all religions.

23 The Childlike State

(Saisavya Tiran)

994. Among the multitudinous human race, only children [i.e. the childlike Sages] who are bereft of the mischievous mind, the ego-sense, will be completely protected from distress by the Mother-Father [i.e. God], who is always thinking of them.

995. Only the pure *mahatmas* in whom the changeful mind [*vikara manas*] does not rise even the least are fortunate people, because the joy of sitting and playing for ever upon the lap of the Mother, who is the source of happiness, is their complete experience.

Sadhu Om: Even though God is so compassionate that He is always bestowing His Grace upon everyone of His own accord, we, the ego, obstruct His Grace by our rising and our mischievous activities. Since *Jnanis*, who are bereft of those mischievous activities of the ego, are like young babies who do not obstruct the efforts which their parents make to protect them, they alone are fortunate ones who always enjoy the supreme bliss of God's Grace.

24 Union with Self

(Atma Muyakka Tiran)

996. The state which is devoid of the dual distinction 'I' and 'He' and in which one has become one with the Bridegroom, Self, who is the space of true knowledge [*mey-jnana*], the 'I'-sense having dropped away, is itself the glory of the chastity of being one with Siva.

Sadhu Om: If verse 73 of this work is also read here, the expres-

sion “the glory of the chastity of being one with Siva” will be clearly understood.

997. Can there be speech or breath in that silent union in which the dual outlook ‘I’ and ‘He’ [or ‘I am He’] is merged in oneness? When ‘I’ is [thus] destroyed, [that is] when the look of eye meets together with eye, spoken words are of no use whatsoever.

Sadhu Om: The last two lines of this verse are verse 1100 of *Tirukkural* [see verse 286 of this work, where the same *Tirukkural* verse is used]. This verse of *Tirukkural* describes the meeting of the eyes of two lovers, but in this present verse Sri Muruganar uses the same verse in a spiritual context.

When the ego is destroyed, all dual feelings such as ‘God and soul’ [*Siva-jiva*] and ‘Master and disciple’ [*Guru-sishya*] will also be completely destroyed, and hence Silence alone will remain. Only when the difference *‘Siva* and *jiva’* exists can the power of speech be used to worship God by singing *stotras* and so on, and only when the difference *‘Guru* and *sishya’* exists can the power of speech be used for imparting *upadesa* to the disciple. However, since the purpose of all spoken words such as *stotras* sung by the devotee or *upadesa* given by the Guru is only to destroy the ego and thereby to make the difference ‘I’ and ‘He’ merge into oneness in the state of supreme Silence, in that final state spoken words will be no further use.

Since the Tamil word for ’eye’ [*kan*] also means knowledge or consciousness, the phrase “When the look of eye meets together with eye” should here be understood to mean when the attention of the limited individual consciousness [the ego] meets with and thereby merges into the unlimited supreme consciousness [Self], just like a river meeting with and merging into the ocean. When the ego thus merges into Self, it loses its individuality and is completely destroyed, and thereby all dualities and differences created by that ego are also destroyed. In such a state of perfect Silence, how can there be even the least speech or breath, or anything else for that matter?

998. [Only] those who have united [with Self] can know the nature of those who have united [with Self]. How can those who have not united [with Self] know it? The

nature of those who have united [with Self], like a honey-bee which has drunk honey, is so great that they do not know anything other than Self.

Michael James: When a honey-bee has drunk honey, it is so much intoxicated that it knows nothing else. Likewise, having become one with Self, the *Jnani* knows nothing other than Self, and hence the nature of his state [i.e. the nature of His existence, the nature of His consciousness or knowledge, and the nature of His bliss] cannot be known by others who have not attained that state. Compare here verse 31 of *Ulladu Narpadu*.

Sri Muruganar: The nature of those who have united with the reality, like a honey-bee which has drunk honey, is so great that it cannot be known by others. This is so because they do not know otherness. Only those who have united can know the nature of those who have united; those who have not united cannot know it.

999. Even by those who have united [with Self], the happiness of union cannot be thought of but can only be experienced. Those who have united [cannot think even of] the method by which they have attained [that state of] Silence, annihilating the ego-sense in that *anandatitam* [that state transcending bliss].

Michael James: Though only those who have attained union with Self can know the nature or state of those who have attained that union, even they cannot express it to others but can only experience it. If it were then asked, "They cannot express it to others because for them there are no others, but cannot at least they themselves think of that state and how they attained it?", the answer would be that even that is impossible, because for them the thinking mind or ego has been completely destroyed.

Moreover, in the state of absolute reality which is experienced by *Jnanis*, the state of *ajnana* is realized to be ever non-existent, and hence it is impossible for them to think of a method by which they passed from the ever-non-existent state of *ajnana* to the state of *Jnana*, the ever-existing and sole reality. That is why it is said in verse 413 of this work that it is impossible to trace the path by which *Jnanis* have reached Self. Since Self alone exists, there can be no place or state (such as *ajnana*) outside Self

from which it can be reached and hence no path by which it can be reached. For a bird which is flying in the sky, there can be no path to reach the sky, and for a fish which is swimming in the water, there can be no path to reach the water. Since we are truly ever Self and Self alone, there can be no path or method for us to reach Self. However, so long as we think that we do not know ourselves to be Self, the sole existing reality, Sages have to advise us to try to find out who or what we really are. When we thus turn our attention towards ourselves in order to find out 'Who am I?', we will find that we are always nothing but Self alone, and that the seeming ego or individuality which we are wrongly taking to be 'I' was ever non-existent. In that state we cannot think that we have followed any path or method; we will merely realize that we are ever as we are, and that we have never undergone even the least change or movement of any kind.

25 The Greatness of Consciousness

(Chaitanya Matchi Tiran)

1000. The knowledge which sees the world as if different [from itself], the objective knowledge which is the ego [*ahankara*], is merely insentient [*jada*]. When [this] ego dies, the flame of pure non-duality [*suddha-advaita*], which is the knowledge of the source of the mind, will shine forth.

Michael James: The ego, the objective knowledge which sees the world as other than itself, is insentient [*jada*] and unreal [*asat*] because it identifies the insentient and unreal body as 'I'. Therefore, the pure non-dual real knowledge will shine forth only when this insentient ego, the unreal knowledge, is destroyed.

1001. Existence [*sat*] itself shines as consciousness [*chit*]. Therefore, until the mind [*chittam*] is completely extinguished and [thereby] becomes the absolute existence-consciousness [*kevala sat-chit*], it is impossible for the petty mind, which is a false imagination [*kalpana*], a reflection of consciousness [*chit-abhasa*], to see the reality, which is the non-dual supreme consciousness.

1002. Only till the sun appears on the eastern horizon, will

the self-conceit of that moon [shine proudly] in this world. [Likewise] only till the knowledge which is of the nature of consciousness [*chinmaya-unarvu* i.e. Self-knowledge] appears, destroying the delusive knowledge, the ego, will the self-conceit of the *jiva's* knowledge [shine proudly]. Know thus.

Michael James: That is, the *jiva's* intellectual knowledge and skill in the various arts and sciences.

1003. In the front of the great sun, the Self – [which ever shines] in the Heart, the sky of consciousness [*chit-akasa*], without rising and setting – the mind of the *Atma-jnani* is, in the vast world, like the moon seen in broad daylight.

Michael James: During the night the moon may be of some use in enabling one to see the world dimly, but after the sun has risen the moon is of no further use, even though it may continue to be seen in the sky. Likewise, in the state of *ajnana* the mind, which is a mere reflection of the pure light of Self, may appear to be of some use in illuminating the world, but after the sun of Self-knowledge [*atma-jnana*] has risen, the mind is of no more use than the moon in broad daylight.

1004. Know that the mind which illumines the illusory world is [a mere reflected light] like the glittering mirror-light, reflecting the bright sunlight.

Michael James: The illusory world of names and forms is projected and illumined only by the mind-light, which is but a dim reflection of the true light of Self. Just as the pale moonlight is swallowed when the bright sunlight appears, so the pale mind-light is swallowed when the bright Self-light surges forth (see verse 857). When the mind-light is thus swallowed, the illusory names and forms of the world, which were depending upon that sunlight for their seeming existence, will also disappear, being found to be unreal in front of the real light of Self-consciousness. (See verse 114 of this work).

26 The Greatness of the Infinite

(Bhuma Matchi Tiran)

1005. The state in which one does not see any second-person object, the state in which one does not hear a second-person object, the state in which one does not know any second-person object – know that state alone is the infinite [*bhuma*].

Michael James: The *upadesa* given by Sri Bhagavan in this verse is the same as that given by Sanatkumara in the *Chandoyga Upanishad*, 7.24.1, namely, "That [state] in which one does not see what-is-other [*anya*], does not hear what-is-other and does not know what-is-other, is the Infinite [*bhuma*], whereas that [state] in which one sees what-is-other, hears what-is-other and knows what-is-other, is finite [*alpa*]. That which is infinite [*bhuma*], alone is immortal [eternal and hence real], whereas that which is finite [*alpa*] is mortal [transitory and hence unreal] ... ". In the same *Upanishad* 7.25.1 and 7.25.2, the Infinite [*bhuma*] is identified as being synonymous first with 'I' (*aham*) and then with Self (*atma*). Therefore in this verse and the next, the word '*Bhuma*' should be understood to mean Self or *Brahman*, our own true state of mere being.

From the present verse we have to understand that any state in which there is even the least knowledge of any second- or third-person object is not the true state of Self, the real waking; it is only another dream occurring in the sleep of Self-forgetfulness (refer here to *The Path of Sri Ramana* – Part One, p. 143). Therefore, whatever state we may experience, even if it be a divine or heavenly state such as living in *Siva Loka* or *Vaikuntha*, so long as we experience anything other than the mere Self-consciousness 'I am', we should enquire 'Who knows these other things?' and thereby turn our attention back towards the first person feeling 'I'. When the attention is thus fixed more and more intensely upon the first person, the rising of that first person (the ego or mind which sees those other things) will subside more and more, until finally it merges forever in its source, whereupon the true state of Self, in which nothing other than the mere Self-consciousness 'I am' is known, will be experienced.

1006. Where that which is seen, that which is heard and

***pramada* [i.e., the ego, whose nature is *pramada* or inattentiveness to Self], which has the greatness of seeing finiteness, are [all] destroyed, [that] immeasurable *Bhuma*, [whose form is] the non-dual knowledge [*advaita-jnana*], alone is the pure happiness of abundant peace.**

Michael James: The *upadesa* given by Sri Bhagavan in this verse is the same as that given by Sanatkumara in the *Chandogya Upanishad*, 7.23.1, namely, "That which is infinite [bhuma] alone is happiness [*sukham*]. In the finite [*alpa*] there is no happiness. The infinite alone is happiness [*bhumaiva sukham*] ...." But in the present verse Sri Bhagavan reveals more about the nature of that *Bhuma*, which alone is happiness, namely that it is the non-dual *Jnana* which is devoid of anything seen or anything heard, and which is devoid even of the ego, whose nature is pramada (inattentiveness to Self) and whose so-called 'greatness' lies only in knowing finite objects. From the two verses in this chapter we should understand that true happiness lies only in the infinite, eternal and real state of non-dual knowledge, which is devoid of both the knowing mind and the objects known, and that not even the least real happiness exists in the finite, transitory and unreal state of dual knowledge, in which objects are known.

27 The Space of *Jnana*

(Jnana Veli Tiran)

1007. O men who – after running all over the world and after seeing and worshipping holy men – are making research upon the truth with great love, if you scrutinize the supreme reality which [those] great *tapasvins* clearly know, [you will find that it is nothing but] the open and empty space of *Jnana*.

Michael James: The reality which is experienced by *Jnanis* is only the empty space of *Jnana* (the knowledge of one's own existence), that is, the mere consciousness 'I am'. This space of *Jnana* is the same as the *Bhuma* described in the previous chapter, and it is here said to be an open and empty space because it is the state which is completely devoid both of objects to know and of a mind to know them.

1008. When scrutinized, that which is shown and given by the Guru-Fathers [the father-like Gurus] to the disciples who go in search of spiritual masters, hurrying around the world, is only the wonderful space of *Jnana* [the mere consciousness 'I am'].

1009. The eternal goal, which is the resort or refuge in which the weary wanderings here and there come to an end, [and which is given by] the *Jnana*-Guru, who is Siva, the supreme reality, who shines triumphantly as the defectless existence-consciousness [*sat-chit*], is only the wonderful space of *turiya* [the empty space of *Jnana*].

Michael James: The weary wanderings through so many births and deaths, as well as the weary wanderings of the body and mind in each birth, come to an end.

1010. If, to the very end, one makes a full effort to attain abidance [as Self], which removes bondage [in the form] of desires [*sankalpas*], just as a snake removes its skin, what emerges is [only] the open and empty space of *Jnana*.

1011. The glory of the light of the space of consciousness [*chit-akasa jyoti*] is the cremation-ground in which the *jiva*, the unlimited reflection of consciousness [*chit-abhasa*], is completely dead [and is being burnt to ashes]. It is like [a fire] catching a dense dry forest and spreading and burning without limit.

Michael James: The *jiva*, the reflection of consciousness, is here described as unlimited because it is the root-cause of an unlimited quantity of tendencies (*vasanas*), the seeds which give rise to all ignorant imaginations (*ajnana-kalpanas*). When this *jiva* is completely destroyed and is burning along with all its *vasanas* in the fire of true knowledge (*jnanagni*), the cremation-ground in which it thus burns is the expanse of pure consciousness (*chit-akasa*), whose light is like the expanse of blazing fire which catches and instantly spreads all over a vast, dense and dry forest, reducing it completely to ashes. In this simile, the dry wood of the vast forest is to be understood as being like the innumerable *vasanas* of the

jiva, which have become dry as a result of the *jiva's vairagya* or inattention to them, and which have thereby become fit fuel for the fire of *Jnana* (see pages 102 to 103 of *The Path of Sri Ramana – Part One*). The Light of pure consciousness, which is here said to be like a wild forest fire that spreads all around and instantly consumes the ego and all its products (the whole world-appearance), is the same as the blazing sun of Arunachala (the sun of Self-knowledge) which, as described in verse 27 of *Sri Arunachala Aksharamanamalai* and verse 1 of *Sri Arunachala Pancharatna*, swallows everything by its spreading rays of bright light (see verse 114 of this work).

1012. Know that that which is worthy [to be attained] is only Silence, which is mere Self, the [wrong] knowledge 'I' having died as ignorance [*ajnana*]. If you ask the truth, "Why [is it so]?", [it is because that state of Silence is] the space [of *Jnana*] in which nothing exists to desire and [thereby] be a cause of misery.

Michael James: Desire is the sole cause of misery, and it can arise only if something other than oneself exists. Therefore, since Silence, the state of Self, is the space of mere consciousness in which nothing other than Self exists, it alone is worthy to be attained. In order to attain this Silence, the ego, the wrong knowledge 'I am the body', must be destroyed, having being found to be nothing but a non-existent ignorance.

1013. The glory of the vast space of true knowledge [*mey-jnana*], whose greatness cannot be excelled by anything else, cannot easily be seen by any other means, but only by the Grace of the Guru, who destroys [all our] defects.

1014. Those who have seen the glory of [that] vast space [of *Jnana*] will be transformed into the supremely blissful and silent Siva, having destroyed birth [and death], which were multiplied more and more because of the vanity of attachment [to the body as 'I'] and the other vanity [of taking the objects of this world, including the body, to be 'mine'].

1015. The subject for *Parasakti*, who stands as the predi-

cate, having as objects all the things which are known by the five – tasting, smelling, seeing, hearing and touching – is the space of *Jnana*, the wonderful state.

Sadhu Om: In a sentence the object depends upon the predicate or main verb, and the predicate depends upon the subject. Without the predicate and object, the subject can stand, but without the subject, the predicate and object cannot stand. In this verse the entire world-appearance, which consists merely of the knowledge acquired through the five senses, is compared to the object of a sentence; *Parasakti*, the power of *maya* which creates this world-appearance, is compared to the predicate or main verb of a sentence; and the empty space of *Jnana*, the true state of Self upon which both *Parasakti* and Her creation depend for their seeming existence, is compared to the subject of a sentence. Thus in a humorous way Sri Bhagavan declares that this whole vast universe and its powerful creator exist only by depending upon a mere open and empty space.

Another hidden meaning is also given in this verse. The Tamil word for 'subject' is *'ezhuvay'*, which can also mean 'the rising place'; the Tamil word for 'predicate' is *'payanilay'*, which can also mean 'useless'; and the Tamil word for 'object' is '*seyyappadu porul'*, which means 'the thing made'. Thus Sri Bhagavan indirectly warns, "If you rise from the space of *Jnana* and thereby create so many things, it is of no use".

Throughout this present chapter, from verse 1007 to 1015, the state of *Jnana* – the supreme goal of life [*parama-purushartha*] which is finally to be attained by *sadhakas* after practising so many *sadhanas* and after making so many sacrifices throughout so many births – instead of being glorified as a very great achievement, is described as "an open and empty space, a mere space which is devoid of any other thing to be desired or attained, a mere state of absolute silence". However, it should be understood that the reason why Sri Bhagavan seemingly ridicules the state of *Jnana* in this manner is only to enable us to know the real greatness of that empty space-like state. That is, Sri Bhagavan teaches in these verses that, since not only all the countless objects of this unimaginable great and vast universe, but even the *parasakti* which creates and sustains them, rise and spread out only from the space of

Self-knowledge [*atma-jnanakasa*], which is the mere consciousness 'I am', the supreme and unsurpassed state is only the state of *Jnana*, the mere knowledge of our own existence, which is the base that supports that almighty *Parasakti*.

Since, having risen from and forsaken the state of mere existence-consciousness [the knowledge of their own being], the minds of all *jivas* always remain extroverted and take pride only in objective knowledge, they will not be fit to attain the state of *moksha* or *Jnana* unless they give up that liking for objective knowledge and instead gain great love for and find complete satisfaction in the state of mere being. It is only in order to teach this truth and thereby to instill firm *vairagya* in the hearts of His devotees, that Sri Bhagavan glorifies the state of *Jnana* by describing it in this chapter as a mere open and empty space. It is also only for this same reason that Sri Bhagavan once humorously remarked, "Everyone who comes here says that they have come only for *moksha*. But if even a small experience of *moksha* were given as a sample, that would be sufficient, and not even a single crow or sparrow would remain here; all would fly away and I would be left sitting here all alone!"

28 The Space of Consciousness

(Chit-Ambara Tiran)

1016. Wandering here and there in search of the space of consciousness [*chit-ambara*], which exists and shines everywhere as Self, is like searching with a flaming torch for the sun in broad daylight, which by its supremacy puts the white moon to shame.

Sri Muruganar: The space of consciousness [*chitrambalam* or *chit-ambara*] is that which is also called the Heart-space [*daharakasa* or *hridayakasa*], the consciousness-space [*chidakasa*] and the knowledge-space [*jnanakasa*]. That alone is the true form of God, who shines as Self.

1017. 'I' [the ego] is unreal; this [the world], which is not [that 'I'], is also unreal; the knowledge which knows 'That I am this [body]' is also utterly unreal [or that 'I', the knowledge which knows this, is also utterly unreal]; the primordial cause [*mula-prakriti*] which makes the triad [*triputi*] appear, is also unreal. The

wonderful space of consciousness [*chit-ambara*] alone is real.

Michael James: The primordial cause (*mula-prakriti*) mentioned here is *maya*, the mind or ego. The space of consciousness, which alone is real, is the same as the *Bhuma* described in verses 1005 and 1006, whose nature is mere existence-consciousness and which is completely devoid of the unreal triad – the knower (the ego), the act of knowing and the objects known.

1018. Those who are deluded, thinking 'That which is known through the five senses is real,' and who set aside as unreal their own state [of Self], which is the space of consciousness on which all the many vast and crowded worlds appear [like pictures on a cinema-screen], cannot attain the supreme benefit [of Self-knowledge].

1019. Who else but *Jnanis*, who shine as Siva Himself, having destroyed the impurities of the mind [i.e. the tendencies or *vasanas*], can clearly know the greatness of the glorious space of consciousness [the state of true *Jnana*], which is untouched by any defect or deficiency?

28 Revelation

(Arivurutta Tiran)

1020. "Therefore that space of consciousness is itself the real supreme Siva, which cannot be described by anyone" – saying thus, the divine Lord Ramana, the supreme *Jnani*, revealed to me the state of Self, which is Siva Himself.

1021. Self itself graciously revealed and bestowed Self, which is the form of Self, at the time, which is the form of Self, and in the place, which is the form of the Self; in order for Self to attain [itself], it realized itself as the form of Self.

Sadhu Om: In the above two verses Sri Muruganar expressed the experience of supreme *Jnana* which was bestowed upon him by the Grace of His *Sadguru*, Bhagavan Sri Ramana. Sri Muruganar's

state of egolessness can be clearly understood here from the fact that he says the Self realized itself, and not, "I have realized Self".

Truly, no *jiva* can ever realize Self; it is Self alone that realizes itself [refer to pages 105 to 106 of *The Path of Sri Ramana – Part One*]. Moreover, from the words used in verse 1021, "at the time, which is in the form of Self, and in the place, which is the form of Self", we should understand that Self does not realize itself at any particular time or in any particular place. Since time and space are both unreal, being nothing but a false appearance in the real Self, the experience of a *Jnani* is that He, the Self, has ever known Himself at all times and in all places. For Him ignorance [*ajnana*] is something which is ever non-existent, so though in the outlook of others it may appear as if He has attained *jnana* at a particular time and place, in His own outlook He does not truly feel that He was once in ignorance and has now attained *Jnana* [see verse 1085].

30 The State of Self

(Atma Nilai Tiran)

1022. When the ego, which projects the world but hides itself [being unable to know its own true nature], enters the heart [by enquiring] thus 'What is the shining source of myself?', the supreme knowledge which shines forth triumphantly and with vigour [in the form of the *sphurana* 'I-I'] is the unending and real state of Self.

Sadhu Om* and *Michael James: The very nature of the ego is to attend only to things other than itself. Therefore, the ego does not know who or what it is. This ignorance of its own nature (i.e. the ignorance of the fact that it truly has no existence of its own) is what is meant here by the words "the ego which hides itself" (*olikkum* ahankaram). But if this transient and unreal ego, which rises in the form of the wrong knowledge 'I am this' or 'I am that', tries to turn its attention away from the world of second and third persons, which it projects through the five senses, and towards itself, the first person, in order to find out 'Who am I?', it will subside into its source, the heart or Self, whereupon the eternal and real state will shine forth of its own accord in the form of the true knowledge 'I am I'.

1023. If – instead of whirling with longing [for worldly plea-

sures] because of objectively knowing other things which appear in front of it due to [its] objective attention – the wicked mind attends to itself, enquiring 'Who am I who knows objects?', [it will attain that state of] abidance in its own reality which alone is the true state [of Self].

1024. Whichever *asrama* they have entered and whichever caste [*varna*] they have been born into, *Jnanis* will ever remain in their own state [the natural state of Self]. Only their own state is the real state; tell me, on the other hand, are not all other states [such as the *varnas* and *asramas*] merely unreal states [since they pertain only to the unreal body]?

1025. The state of Self alone is the real and lovable state. On the other hand, all the states of living in heaven, [which is] like a sky-lotus, are only unreal mental states which feed more and more upon delusion and which, like the water of a mirage, appear [only] due to imagination.

Sadhu Om: The words 'like a sky-lotus' [*van-murali pol*] can give two meanings, namely (i) '[heavens] such as *Brahma-Loka*' [because the throne of Brahma, whose abode is in the sky, is a lotus], and (ii) 'like an imaginary lotus in the sky'. Just like the imaginary lotus seen in the sky and like the imaginary water seen in a mirage, all states other than the state of Self are mere mental delusions and are truly non-existent. Even the pleasures of living in the various kinds of heavens such as *Brahma Loka* are trivial and unreal, and hence they cannot satisfy our yearning for complete and perfect happiness any more than the water of a mirage can quench our thirst. Therefore, the only state which is truly worthy to be loved and aspired for is the state of Self.

1026. Even though one's own natural reality itself exists [and is experienced daily in deep sleep] as the supreme happiness, [one's] searching for happiness and [thereby] suffering with the deluded and deceptive mind always going after what-is-other [the non-Self], is itself losing that which is happiness.

Sri Muruganar: Since the actual truth of their own experience is expressed by everyone thus, "I woke up from sleep; I slept happily," it is agreed by everyone that Self shines as the form of happiness in the natural state of sleep, where the mind is empty and devoid of attachment to sense-objects. If it is asked why that happiness, which existed as one's own nature in that state, ceases to be experienced as soon as sleep comes to an end, it is because of one's desire to run after sense-objects, having been separated from one's own state. Therefore it is advised that one should attain the unsurpassed happiness which is one's own true experience, by keeping the mind unshaken by the desire for sense-objects, which arises due to delusion, by knowing oneself and by shining without inattention [*pramada*], remaining peaceful even in the waking state as in sleep.

1027. *Jnanis* know that the taste of Self [*atma-rasam*] alone is the best taste [*ati-rasam*], and hence they abide in the state of Self. Those who do not know that the happiness of Self alone is definitely the highest, abide in the state of the world [i.e. they remain immersed in worldly life seeking only mundane pleasures].

Michael James: In the appendix of *Guru Vachaka Kovai – Urai*, Sri Sadhu Om included eleven stray verses of Sri Bhagavan and gave notes indicating where each one should be incorporated in the text. In verse 6 of that appendix, which should be incorporated here, Sri Bhagavan says:

> **If [through the enquiry 'Who am I?'] one knows one's true nature in the heart, [it will be found to be] existence-consciousness-bliss [*sat-chit-ananda*], which is beginningless and endless fullness [wholeness or perfection].**

In the above verse Sri Bhagavan has paraphrased verse 28 of *Upadesa Undiyar*.

1028. Those who do not know that their own nature is happiness, will be deluded like a musk-deer, [whereas] those who clearly know their own nature [to be existence-consciousness-bliss], will abide in their own

state [of Self] without attending to the world [and without seeking happiness from worldly objects].

Michael James: The musk-deer emits a pleasant odour, but not knowing that the odour is coming only from itself, it runs here and there in search of the source of that odour. Similarly, not knowing that all the happiness they enjoy comes only from their own Self, whose very nature is happiness, ignorant people (*ajnanis*) run after worldly objects in search of happiness. Compare here verse 585 of this work, and pages 36 to 40 of *The Path of Sri Ramana* – Part One.

1029. That which is called happiness is only the nature of Self; Self is not other than perfect happiness. That which is called happiness alone exists. Knowing that fact and abiding in that state of Self, enjoy bliss eternally.

Sadhu Om: Refer to the work *Who am I?*, in which Sri Bhagavan says, "That which is called happiness is only the nature of Self; happiness and Self are not different. The happiness of Self [*atma-sukha*] alone exists; that alone is real."

31 The Power of Self

(Atma Vala Tiran)

B20. Proclaim thus, "Whoever has conquered the senses by knowledge [*jnana*], being a knower of Self [*atma-vid*] who abides as existence-consciousness, is the fire of knowledge [*jnanagni*]; [He is] the wielder of the thunderbolt of knowledge [*jnana-vajrayudha*]; He, Kala-kalan, is the hero who has killed death.

Michael James: The wielder of the thunderbolt (*vajrayudha*) is Indra, the most powerful of the gods, who is believed by some followers of the *karma-kanda* (the portion of the *Vedas* which teaches ritualistic actions for the fulfillment of worldly desires) to be the Supreme Lord of the Universe. Therefore in this verse Sri Bhagavan tells such *karma-kandis* that the real Indra, the *Jnana-Indra*, is only the *Atma-jnani*.

The word *'kala'* means either 'death' or 'time', and is a name of Yama, the God of death. *Kala-karan* means either 'death to

death' or 'conqueror of time', and is a name of Lord Siva, who killed Yama.

Thus in this verse Sri Bhagavan reveals that the *Jnani* is not merely an incarnation of any particular God. The *Jnani* is *Jnana* itself, and hence He is none other than Indra, Lord Siva and all other Gods. Since the *Jnani* has conquered the senses, through which the whole universe is projected, He has in truth conquered the whole universe. Therefore, in the entire universe there is no power greater than the power of the *Jnani's* Self-abidance.

The above verse of Sri Bhagavan, which is also included in *Ulladu Narpadu –Anubandham* as verse 28, summarizes the ideas expressed in the following two verses of Sri Muruganar.

1030. Only the powerful *Jnani*, who has conquered the five [senses] by Self-abidance, which blazes forth unobstructed [by even the least *pramada*], is the wielder of the thunderbolt of *Jnana* who has destroyed Yama, who will never turn back [empty-handed]; [He is] the sun of *Jnana*, which destroys [the darkness of] the appearance of [the six inner enemies, namely desire, anger, miserliness, delusion, pride and] jealousy.

1031. Know that He [the *Jnani*] who, angrily driving it back into the heart [through Self-attention], destroys the cruel Surapadma, the 'I' [or ego], who possesses the power of creating and sustaining all the worlds through the six senses, is Kumara [Lord Subrahmanya], who revels in supreme bliss.

Sadhu Om: Since it is only through the mind that one is able to know the world through the other five senses, the mind is sometimes counted as one among the senses, thus making them six in number.

The fact that the true *Jnani*, who has conquered and destroyed the ego, is the embodiment of all the forms of God [*Iswara-murtis*], is also revealed by Sri Bhagavan in verse 6 of *Devikalottaram*, "He is the Four-faced One [Brahma], Siva and Vishnu; He is the king of the *devas* [Indra] and Guha [Lord Subrahmanya]; He alone is the Guru of all *devas*; He is the great Yogi and the possessor of the wealth of all *tapas*."

32 The Nature of Self

(Atma Swarupa Tiran)

1032. O men who are [wrongly believing] that this body, which is [insentient like] a picture, is 'I', can a picture think anything? That which thinks and that which forgets is only the soul. Therefore, that which is called 'I' is [not the insentient body but] only that [the sentient soul].

Sadhu Om: In this verse the ego or *jiva*, the false 'I', is referred to as if it were the real 'I'. Why? Since Sri Bhagavan's aim at first is only to prove the sentient being is only the *jiva* or mind which thinks and forgets. He then concludes that the body, which is insentient and which cannot think anything, is therefore not 'I'. Then in the next verse He reveals the truth that even this mind is not the real 'I'. Thus the method of teaching adopted by Sri Bhagavan in these two verses is the same as that mentioned in *Kaivalya Navanitham*, chapter 1, verse 18, namely, "Like showing the crescent moon by first showing some trees on earth, and like showing Arundhati [a small star] by first showing some [larger] stars in the sky ... ".

1033. When that body is [thus found to be] different [from 'I'], there must be another soul [or life] having as its body the soul, whose form is 'I am the body', shining within that soul. When this is so, except that [other soul], which is the real soul, can there be other souls? Tell me.

Sadhu Om: The thinking and forgetting soul mentioned in the previous verse is the *jiva*, whose form is the thought 'I am the body'. But since that verse concludes that the body is not 'I', the *jiva* or ego is found to have actually no form at all. In other words, since the *jiva* is neither the insentient body nor the consciousness 'I am', but is only a false link which seemingly comes into existence when these two different things are mistaken to be one and the same, we have to conclude that the *jiva* has no real existence and that it therefore cannot be 'I', the real soul or life. Thus we must accept that there is another soul [another sentient reality] which has been existing all this time within that insentient *jiva*, activating it and having it as its abode. This other soul [the Self], which has the *jiva* as

its body and which is the consciousness or life that makes that insentient *jiva* appear as if it were sentient or alive, alone is the real soul. When Self [the real, pure consciousness 'I am'] is thus found to be the sole reality of the *jivas* [the unreal, mixed consciousness 'I am the body'], how can there truly exist any souls other than Self? Thus this verse teaches that except Self, the one and only real soul or life, there never exists any soul at any time or in any place.

Michael James: Refer here to verse 1051.

1034. The reality which shines fully, without misery and without a body not only when the world is known but also when the world is not known [as in sleep], is your real form [*nija-swarupa*].

1035. Let the world which is known [through the five senses] be real or let it be discarded as an imagination of the mind which knows [it], do you not exist there as the form of the knowing consciousness? That, the pure consciousness ['I am'], alone is the form of Self [*atma-swarupa*].

1036. The reality which is the mere consciousness [of one's own existence] that remains when ignorance [of objects] is destroyed along with knowledge [of objects], alone is Self [*atma*]. In that *Brahma-swarupa*, which is abundant Self-awareness [*prajnana*], there is not the least ignorance [*ajnana*]. Know thus.

Sadhu Om: People generally think that the state of not knowing other things is a state of ignorance [*ajnana*]. But this is not correct. Indeed, the knowledge of other things is itself ignorance [see *Ulladu Narpadu*, verse 13]. Since even during the absence of the so-called knowledge of other things, which is nothing but ignorance, the pure Self-knowledge 'I am' is experienced by everyone, this knowledge of one's own existence is alone the perfect knowledge [*purna-jnana*]. This knowledge, which is different from other knowledges, is referred to in this verse as 'the reality which is mere [or empty] consciousness' [v*etrarivana unmai*], 'Self' [*atma*], 'Self-awareness' [*prajnana*] and *'Brahma-swarupa'*.

1037. It [that *Brahma-swarupa*] is not only that which is

devoid of ignorance [*ajnana*], but is also Self, which is perfect knowledge [*sujnana*]. If it were not real knowledge [*sat-bodha*], how could the differences of the intellect be born from it?

Sadhu Om: The phrase 'the differences of the intellect' [*vijnana-bheda*] means the knowledge of differences [the knowledge of dyads and triads] which shines in the intellect or *vijnanamaya-kosa* and which is experienced by all *jivas*. Though this qualified knowledge [*visesha jnana*] is unreal, the base from which it seemingly rises or is born must be a real knowledge or consciousness. Therefore it is to be concluded that Self [*atma*], the source of the intellect, is of the very nature of knowledge [*jnana*]. Refer here to verse 12 of *Ulladu Narpadu*, " ... Know that Self is knowledge, not a void".

1038. That knowledge is not a quality [*guna*] of Self, because the nature of Self is *nirguna* [devoid of qualities]. [Moreover] Self-knowledge is not an act [of knowing], because [Self is] without doership [*akartritva*]. [Therefore] knowledge is the very nature [of Self].

Michael James: Since Self is the non-dual reality, there is no other thing to know Self, and hence it is Self alone that knows itself. But since Self is by nature without doership and hence actionless, Self's knowledge of itself is not an act of knowing; Self knows itself not by an act of knowing, but by being itself [see *Upadesa Undiyar* verse 26, "Being Self is itself knowing Self, because Self is that which is devoid of duality ... "]. Therefore it follows that the very nature of Self is itself knowledge, though it is a knowledge which is devoid of the act of knowing. That is why Sri Bhagavan says in verse 12 of *Ulladu Narpadu*, " ... That which knows cannot be [true] knowledge ... ". The same truth is also expressed by Sri Muruganar in verse 831 of *Mey Tava Vilakkam*, where he says, "The real 'I' is such a knowledge which knows neither other things nor itself". Since Self-knowledge is non-dual, it is a knowledge which shines without the triad [triputi] – the knower, the act of knowing and the object known – and hence it is quite different from other kinds of knowledge, all of which involve the act of knowing. Refer also to *The Path of Sri Ramana* – Part Two, appendix 4 (c), p. 236.

1039. That adjunctless knowledge, which is merely powerful existence, which shines within of its own accord as the indestructible 'I am', and which does not depend even in the least upon any other thing, alone is the nature of one's own unshakeable reality [Self].

1040. How to know one's own reality, which [as described in the previous verse] exists as the shining of *Jnana*, like [one knows] petty sense-objects [second and third persons]? [But] if one peacefully abides in Self, [thereby] destroying the false first person 'I' [the ego which rises mixed with adjuncts as 'I am this, I am so-and-so'], the real first person [Self, the real 'I'] will shine forth of its own accord.

1041. Among the many groups which are triads [*triputis* or the three factors of objective knowledge], no factor [*puti*] can exist leaving Self. However, not even one among those factors is Self. Only that which remains as the base of all those [factors] is the real state of Self.

Sadhu Om: The group of three factors, the seer, the act of seeing and the object seen, is a triad [*triputi*]. 'I am the seer', 'I am seeing' and 'these objects are seen by me' – none of these three knowledges can exist without an 'I'. But this 'I', the seer, is not Self; it is only the ego. Therefore, it is said in this verse that none of the three factors which constitute a triad is Self. Actions or *pravrittis* such as seeing are not the nature of Self. 'I am seeing' is the nature of the ego's knowledge. The knowledge of one's own existence, 'I am', alone is the nature of Self. If there did not exist the basic knowledge, 'I am', the qualified knowledge 'I am seeing' could not arise for the ego. Therefore it is said in this verse that none of the factors for a triad can exist leaving Self, and also that, since objective knowledge does not exist for Self, none of those factors are Self.

1042. One's own Self, whose greatness is eternality and perfect wholeness is not at all duality [another thing] to be attained. Uniting with [attaining yoga with] Self is knowing [one's own] existence [*sat*] and is not knowing any other thing. That knowledge [the knowl-

edge of one's own existence] alone is the real form of Self.

Michael James: Real *yoga* is only union with Self, which is not the state of knowing other things but only the state of knowing one's own existence. Since in order to know a thing we must attend to it, the only path to attaining the real *yoga* is Self-attention and not attention to any other thing. When by Self-attention one thus attains *yoga* or union with one's own Self, it will be found that such Self-attention (the consciousness of one's own existence) is itself the real form or nature of Self.

1043. The one unending supreme knowledge which exists as the base for the appearance of all dyads [*dvandvas* or pairs of opposites] which are seen, such as subtle [*sukshama*] and gross [*sthula*], void [*sunya*] and full [*purna*], and despondency [arising from craving] and elation free from craving, alone is 'I' [the real form or nature of Self].

1044. The one real consciousness [*chinmaya*] that exists as the base for the rising of the many unreal selves [egos] and for [their] suffering, without itself suffering due to the miseries produced by the mind, which exists without performing the two *karmas* [good and bad], alone is Self.

1045. Know that the Heart-space which, like the sun, exists and shines of its own accord as the mere nature [of existence] 'I am' and as the true clarity [of consciousness], which is devoid of pride of [attachment to] the body, alone is Self.

1046. That which is the dense Silence, real consciousness, the subtlest light, which is not the ego that objectively knows things in front of it as 'this', and over which the mind becomes dejected and laments, "I do not know it", alone is Self, the existence-consciousness.

1047. All the worlds are a moving picture-show, [whereas] Self is the unmoving [screen of] real consciousness.

Michael James: Compare here verse 1218.

1048. [Just like in a cinema show] those triads [*triputis*] are projected on the screen of that reality [Self], which is the form of consciousness.

1049. Just like the keynote [*sruti*], which is the [unchanging] note mixed in with and indispensable for all the seven [changing] notes, and just like the screen, which is the [unmoving] base for the pictures which are moving [on it] due to [electric] power, that which exists devoid of the defects [of change and movement] is Self, the reality.

Michael James: Though the other notes are always changing, the keynote (*sruti*) remains ever unchanged; similarly, though the mind and its products, the body and world, are always undergoing innumerable changes, Self, the basic consciousness 'I am', remains ever unchanged. And though the pictures on the screen are always moving, driven by the electric power in the projector, the screen itself remains ever unmoving; similarly, though the mind and its products are ever moving, driven by the power of *prarabdha*, Self, the basic consciousness on which they appear, remains ever unmoving. Thus, like the keynote and the cinema screen, Self is not affected even in the least by any changes or movements which might appear to occur in it.

1050. That which exists always and everywhere without characteristics such as coming and going [or rising and setting], and which, because of its shining within every unreal thing, makes those unreal things, which are many and different, appear as if real, alone is Self, the supreme reality [*para vastu*].

1051. He who is unknown though residing within each and every *jiva,* and who is unceasingly, untiringly and efficiently activating all those *jivas,* having them as His bodies, alone is the immortal inner Self [*antar-atma*].

Michael James: Refer here to verse 1033 and its note.

1052. Know that Self is only [like] the unmoving axle in the middle [of the wheel], and not [like] the spokes of the revolving wheel, which are [similar to] the ever-suf-

fering [or ever-wandering] ego-souls, whose nature is rising and falling [setting].

Sadhu Om: In this chapter, verses 1033, 1046, 1051, 1052 and 1057 clearly show the difference between the *jiva* [the individual soul or ego] and the *atma* [the real Self].

Though in some religious schools of thought such as Saiva Siddhanta and Buddhism the suffering *jiva* is called *'atma'* [or *jivatma*], in the teachings of Sri Ramana and in many *Advaitic* scriptures the word *'atma'* is not used to denote the *jiva* [the ego or unreal soul] but only to denote the supreme reality. Therefore, readers should understand that the difference between these various schools of thought lies only in the meaning given to the word *'atma'*, and not in their final conclusion about the unreality of the individual soul.

1053. That which appears [whatever it may be], let it appear; that which disappears [whatever it may be], let it all disappear. What [loss or gain] is it to Self-knowledge? That which remains after everything has entered and ceased to exist in the oneness [*kevalam*] of Siva – who surges as the Whole [*purnam*] – alone is Self, one's own nature.

Sadhu Om* and *Michael James: All that appears and disappears exists only in the wrong outlook of the ego, and not in the true outlook of Self. Therefore, Self is not affected even in the least by whatever appears or disappears, and hence in this verse and in verse 6 of *Sri Arunachala Ashtakam* Sri Bhagavan says, "Let them appear or let them disappear". That which remains unaffected in any way either by the appearance of this universe or by its disappearance (as in sleep), and which remains shining as the one perfect Whole even after all this appearance has been destroyed at the time of dissolution (*pralaya*) – that alone is Self, that alone is 'we', that alone is Siva.

1054. The pure knowledge which shines forth [as the *sphurana* 'I-I'] when that deceitful ego is scrutinized [through the enquiry 'Who is this I?'] and destroyed, which the *Upanishads* praise as the glorious *darshan*

of Siva's dance and which is the true clarity of God's Grace, alone is the form of Self.

Michael James: In this verse Sri Bhagavan reveals that the true significance of Nataraja, the dancing form of Lord Siva, is the shining forth of Self in the form of the *sphurana*, 'I-I'.

1055. Know that the nature of *Brahma-swarupa*, which is [one] without another [i.e. which is non-dual], is the ancient glory. Though that ancient *swarupa* [Self or *Brahman*] appears to be like a void [*sunya*] it is not a void; [it is] the one single existence-consciousness [*sat-chit*], which is the whole reality itself.

Michael James: Refer also to verse 12 of *Ulladu Narpadu*.

1056. Sages say that the state [or place] in which the thought 'I' [the ego] does not rise even in the least, alone is Silence [*mouna*] or Self [*swarupa*]. [That] silent Self alone is God; Self alone is the *jiva*; Self alone is this ancient world.

Sadhu Om: The same idea is also expressed by Sri Bhagavan in the following two passages of *Who am I?*: "The place [or state] where the slightest trace of the thought 'I' does not exist, alone is Self [*swarupa*]. That alone is called Silence [*mouna*] .... Self alone is the world; Self alone is 'I'; Self alone is God; all is the Supreme Self [*Siva-swarupa*]." Refer also to the note to verse 985 where it is explained in what sense everything is Self or *Brahman*.

1057. The reality – the mere existence which is to the world, soul and God as space is to all objects – alone is the nature of Self, which is the supreme Siva, and which is praised as the supreme abode [*param-dhama*] transcending the mind.

33 The Greatness of Self

(Atma_Matchi Tiran)

1058. Since the greatness of the nature of oneness is that the seer alone is the seen, one's own reality [Self] is the greatest thing [*mahat*]. The silent radiant first person [which shines] after the ego, the first person who

is the seer, has been completely destroyed, alone is Self, the supreme consciousness.

Sadhu Om: All the objects that are seen are nothing but an expansion of the ego, the false first person who sees them. Therefore the reality of both the seer [the ego] and the seen [the entire vast universe] is only one. That reality is nothing but Self, one's own existence-consciousness, which is the real first person that remains shining as radiant Self-awareness in the state of Silence in which the ego, the false first person, has been completely destroyed. Therefore, since the ego or seer is nothing but an unreal, petty and atom-like reflection of Self, one's own reality, Self alone is the greatest of all things.

1059. Those who dive deep fixing their mind [or attention] in Self – the abode of the bliss of consciousness, the vast ocean of peace, the greatest thing [*mahat*] – will attain the Grace of Self, the unending treasure.

1060. Self alone is the greatest thing [*mahat*]; indeed, there is no other *mahat* which is greater than Self. Therefore, by any kind of means [or *tapas*] whatsoever, we have not seen any other thing worthy for one to gain by bartering Self.

Sadhu Om: There is no attainment higher than the attainment of Self; therefore, it is foolish to forsake the attainment of Self in order to attain anything else such as the eightfold *siddhis*. However, there are some so-called *mahatmas* nowadays who ridicule Self-realization, saying that it is not the highest attainment and that even after attaining it there are many greater things which one can attain by practising some peculiar kinds of *yoga*. Therefore, in order to refute such wrong beliefs, in this verse Sri Bhagavan, the greatest of all *tapasvins*, emphatically declares the truth which He realized from His own experience, namely that whatever amount of whatever kind of *tapas* one may do, one cannot attain anything greater than Self-realization.

1061. Except the glorious attainment of the supreme Self, which is the greatest thing [mahat], there is no [worthy] attainment in this life. To know and experience it

[the supreme Self], destroy the worthless ego-self by enquiry [or scrutiny] done in the heart.

1062. If by enquiring [Who am I?'] in the heart one attains the rare wealth of Self, which is the beautiful gem of true knowledge [*mey-jnana*] that is [ever] existing and shining, the poverty in the form of dense delusion will die, [thereby] destroying the misery of birth [and death], which is the root of [all] suffering.

1063. Being ignorant of the value of that gem [of *Jnana*], fools die lazily [without trying to attain it]. [On the other hand] those who, knowing the method [of Self-enquiry], have attained that [gem of *Jnana*], which is the rightful possession of everyone, are the Great Ones, those who have attained supreme bliss. Adore them.

1064. Instead of abiding in the consciousness of one's own Self by peacefully scrutinizing thus, 'Who am I, the form of consciousness?', why to suffer [by going out] through the wicked senses, mistaking [oneself] to be the reflection of consciousness [*chit-abhasa*], which, being separated [from the true Self-consciousness], is the form of the mind [*chittam*]?

1065. Even though one has attained abundantly and completely [all] the occult powers [*siddhis*] beginning with *anima*, which are loved [so much] by foolish worldly people, all the learning learnt by one who has not attained the perfect gem of Self by severing the primal knot [the *chit-jada-granthi* or ego], is void.

Michael James: *Anima*, the first of the eight *siddhis*, is the ability to become as small as an atom.

1066. They [the Sages] say that the treasure of Grace-Silence, the never-leaving thought of divine Siva [i.e. the unbroken state of attention to Self] – is the real wealth. That lustrous supreme treasure, which is difficult to attain, is the wealth which is [available] only to those who have the love to destroy [all] thought.

1067. Just as [a pearl-diver] dives into the ocean, [where

pearls lie] hidden, with a one-pointed mind and with a stone [tied to his waist], obtains the precious pearl and [thereby] becomes happy, dive into the heart with non-attachment [*vairagya*], attain the treasure of Self and [thereby] be free from misery.

Sadhu Om: The same idea is also expressed by Sri Bhagavan in the following passage of *Who am I?*: "Just as a pearl-diver, tying a stone to his waist, dives into the ocean and takes the pearl lying at the bottom, so everyone, diving deep within himself with non-attachment [*vairagya*], can attain the pearl of Self."

1068. The consciousness of the extremely pure Self-experience – which silently exists devoid of both 'I' and 'mine' in one's own Self, which is the one bright reality, that which exists devoid of defects – alone is that which shines above [all].

34 The Supremacy of Self

(Atma Para Tiran)

1069. The existence-consciousness [*sat-bodha*] which shines without [ever] becoming unreal, alone is Self, which transcends the mind and in which the intellect and soul revel. That gracious Supreme, which is a heap of extreme peace, alone is the medicine to make the knowing [or thinking] mind [subside and become] peaceful.

1070. Those who do not know [themselves to be] Self, which is the reality uncontaminated by [even the least] unreality, but [know themselves to be] only the body, which is transient and unreal, will mentally feel happy by sometimes seeing with enthusiasm many kinds of forms of God.

1071. If one approaches and worships any other [any God other than Self], one can obtain all other things [all things other than Self]. But which petty one [which petty God] can bestow upon the *jiva* the life in the divine state of Siva, who is the eternal and real supreme consciousness?

Sadhu Om: If one wishes to attain things other than Self, such as wealth, health, fame, heavenly pleasures and so on, one can attain them by worshipping Gods other than Self. But if one wishes to attain Self-realization, the state of Siva, the supreme consciousness, the direct path is for one to worship Self through the practice of Self-attention. By itself, the worship of any of the names and forms of God is not sufficient to enable one to attain Self-realization, and this is why Sri Bhagavan says in this verse, "Which petty God can bestow upon the *jiva* the life in the divine state of Siva?'. The worship of God in name and form can only purify the mind and thereby lead one indirectly to the path of Self-enquiry.

From this verse the reader can understand that the real meaning intended by Sri Bhagavan in verse 8 of *Ulladu Narpadu* when He used the words "*peruruvil*" is only 'in name and form' and not 'without name and form'. Refer here to appendix 4 (b) of *The Path of Sri Ramana* – Part Two.

1072. Those who do not know their own Self to be the witness both of that which is known in the waking state [the state of *sakala* or manyness] and of that which is not known even in the least in the enveloping sleep [the state of *kevala* or oneness], will be deluded [or distressed] as if they had [at one time] attained [a vision of God] but had [later] lost [it].

Sadhu Om: Just as the objects of the world appear during the waking state and disappear during sleep, so visions of God appear at one time and disappear at another time. Therefore, those visions of God have no more reality than the world and the objects in it. But that which always shines [in the form of the Self-awareness 'I am'] both in waking [when objects are known] and in sleep [when objects are not known] is Self. Only because they do not attend to and realize the ever-shining nature of Self as it is, some aspirants feel happy at one time as if they had seen God and feel distressed at other times as if they had lost that vision of God. But those who have known Self, which neither appears nor disappears, will never have cause to experience such distress.

1073. Since the many Gods which are seen due to [the strength of] the worship [*upasana*] performed, undergo [the change of] appearance and disappearance,

one's own nature [Self], which is that which ever exists and is known, is the real and supreme God, which remains [for ever] without changing.

Sadhu Om: The nature of the reality is to shine always, without changing or disappearing, whereas visions of God appear and disappear. Even before that God appeared, the knowledge of our existence [our existence-consciousness, *sat-chit*] was shining; even while that God was appearing, our existence was shining in the form 'I, who see this God, exist'; and even after that God had disappeared, our experience was that we existed to know that disappearance. Therefore, since that which was shining in all the three times without changing or disappearing was only our own existence-consciousness, this verse affirms that that existence-consciousness [*sat-chit*], which is Self, alone is the supreme God [*para-deva*] and the real God [*nija-deva*].

1074. Here or there, as this or that, whatever is known wherever as a second person due to [one's] looking through the objective knowledge [the mind] – all of them in every place are [nothing but] the pure space of light [the space of consciousness], one's own reality which exists and shines as Self.

Sadhu Om: In the answer to question 6 of chapter two of *Upadesa Manjari*, Sri Bhagavan says, "Wherever whatever objects are known, it is Self that knows itself there as those objects". Refer also to verse 945, and to p.19 of *The Path of Sri Ramana – Part Two*.

1075. Knowing that whatever is known objectively as 'this' or 'that' is [nothing but] an imagination of the mind, if one remains still [*summa irukka*] in that which is neutral [i.e. if one remains merely as 'I am', the neutral consciousness which does not objectively know any second or third person], that reality which [then] shines forth alone is existence-consciousness [*sat-chit*], the supreme and great Self.

1076. One's becoming confused by scrutinizing, due to delusion, principles [*tattvas*] other than the supreme principle, Self, is just like undergoing the pain of

thoroughly scrutinizing a barber's worthless rubbish instead of collectively discarding it.

Sadhu Om: The same idea is also expressed by Sri Bhagavan in the following passage of *Who am I?*: "Just as it is fruitless for one to scrutinize the rubbish which should be collectively discarded, so it is fruitless for one who should know himself to count the number and scrutinize the properties of the *tattvas* [the principles which constitute the world, soul and God] which are veiling oneself, instead of collectively casting all of them aside." Sri Bhagavan here condemns the way in which scholars waste their time by reading, learning by heart, discussing and endlessly arguing about the details regarding how the universe is created from the five elements, regarding the functioning of the *pranas*, *jnanendriyas*, *karmendriyas*, *nadis* and so on in the body, regarding the various kinds of *jivas*, and regarding all the other innumerable such classifications given in the scriptures. Since all these principles or *tattvas* are only second or third persons, the non-Self [*anatma*], one should not waste one's time in scrutinizing them, but should instead scrutinize Self, the only real principle, through the enquiry 'Who am I?'

1077. Know that for those who abide within with dutiful love [for Self], bliss will surgingly rise more and more. Bliss, love, Siva, Self, Grace, knowledge, peace and liberation – all these are [only names for] one's own real nature.

35 The State of Fearlessness

(Abhaya Nilai Tiran)

1078. Because of the ignorance of the mind experiencing a sense of difference [*bheda-buddhi*] in Self, [even] great *devas* are disturbed by fear. [Therefore] it is wise to remain without fear in the supreme state of non-duality, having attained the reality, one's own Self, through negation [of the non-Self].

Sadhu Om: The nature of *jiva* is to think that fear will be removed only when there is some other person with him. But this idea is foolish. How can there be cause for fear in the state of Self, where no other thing exists? Only in a state where there exists something

other than oneself is it possible for one either to have desire for that thing or to have fear of it. Therefore, true fearlessness can be attained only in the non-dual state of Self, where no other thing exists.

To illustrate how fearlessness can be attained only when one attains the state of Self, Sri Bhagavan used to narrate the following story: After Lord Vishnu had killed Hiranya, Hiranya's son Prahlada was happily ruling the kingdom. But after some time, a fear arose in Prahlada. "Because Lord Vishnu is kind to me, I am living safely. But if one day He becomes angry with me, He will kill me just as He killed my father," thought Prahlada. Being a great devotee of Lord Vishnu, Prahlada had no one else to turn to, so he prayed to Him. The Lord immediately appeared before Prahlada, who then explained his fear and prayed for the state of fearlessness. "Yes," said Lord Vishnu, "You are correct. By seeing me like this in name and form, you cannot be free from fear. You must see me within yourself. Only when you thus realize me to be not different from yourself, will you attain the state of fearlessness". Then the Lord taught him the path of Self-enquiry. When Prahlada followed the Lord's instructions and realized Self, he attained the state of fearlessness. This story thus illustrates that even God cannot serve as permanent refuge from fear so long as one retains the sense of difference [*bheda-buddhi*]. Only by attaining the non-dual Self can one become truly and permanently free from fear.

1079. Only when one attains the freedom of Self [the state of Self-realization] will the abundant peace of mind in which one will endlessly rejoice, be obtained. In the experience of that monarchy [the kingdom of Self], which is the real and space-like [state of] non-duality, there will not be the least dual desire for fear.

Sadhu Om: Only in this one non-dual state of Self, will the truth of the words of Saint Appar, "Now there is nothing to fear, and nothing will come to cause fear," be known practically.

34 Non-Duality

(Advaita Tiran)

1080. Since the one existence-consciousness-bliss alone is seen as God and the soul – just as because of a pot or a room the one open space alone is seen as this or

that space [as a pot-space or a room space] – their existence [the real existence of God and of the soul] cannot be different. Know thus.

Michael James: The space in a pot [*ghatakasa*] and the space in a room [*mathakasa*] appear to be different only because of the limiting adjuncts of the pot and the room, for in reality the space is only one. Similarly, God and the *jiva* appear to be different only because of their limiting adjuncts, for in their real nature, which is existence-consciousness-bliss, they are one and the same. Refer to verse 24 of *Upadesa Undiyar*, where Sri Bhagavan says, "In [their real] nature [which shines] as existence, God and the souls are only one substance [*vastu*]. [Their] sense of adjuncts [*upadhis*] alone is different."

1081. In the reality [the real consciousness 'I am'] is it possible for two different things to come into existence as *jiva* and Siva? If there is any difference [in substance] between the master-doll and the slave-doll, both made of the ambrosia attained, tell me?

Michael James: The only difference between two dolls made of ambrosia, one in the form of a master and the other in the form of a slave, is their names and forms. Their substance, the ambrosia (*amrita*) or nectar of immortality, is one and the same. Similarly, the substance or reality of both God (*Siva*) and the soul (*jiva*) is the one immortal Self, and the seeming difference between them lies only in their names and forms.

37 Atheism

(Nastika Tiran)

1082. Will not only he who mistakes himself to be that which does not exist [i.e. to be the body, which is in truth non-existent] declare You [God] to be non-existent? How can he who knows his own reality as it is [that is, as the mere existence-consciousness 'I am'] deny You, who are that [same] reality, saying that You are non-existent?

Michael James: A note in the Tamil text states that this verse is addressed to God, and that it concerns the belief of the atheist who

believes God does not exist. *'Asattu'* means that which does not exist. *'Mey'* means the reality. That is to say, 'How can one who knows that he exists say that God, who is not different from that existence or reality, does not exist?'

Sadhu Om: Sri Bhagavan concludes verse 20 of Ulladu Narpadu by saying, " ... because Self is not other than God". Accordingly, the atheist who denies the existence of God is thereby denying the existence of his own Self. Since no one can truly deny his own existence, those who wish to deny the existence of God should first try to enquire and know the true nature of their own existence, 'What is the truth of my existence? Who am I?' If they do so, they will automatically come to know the truth of God's existence. Therefore we should understand that those who realize their own existence as it is, will never deny the existence of God, and that since no one can truly deny his own existence, no one is really an atheist. But who is the real theist will be explained in verse 1084.

38 Theism

(Astika Tiran)

1083. For those who say that He [God] does exist, He exists in [their] heart as consciousness. [But] in the venomous mind [of those who do not believe in Him], He will never exist [that is, He will never shine or be known]. If, by purifying the venomous mind, one sees without delusion, He will shine triumphantly and unalloyed as Self.

1084. Know that the Buddha [the Sage or *Atma-jnani*], who has experienced the pure reality [Self], having clearly known 'This is the nature of consciousness', alone is truly worthy of the name 'theist' [*Astika*].

Sadhu Om: Since the world, soul and God all appear, exist and disappear simultaneously, they all have the same degree of reality [*sama-satya*] as each other. Therefore, if one accepts one's own existence as a soul or *jiva*, it amounts to one's accepting the existence of the other two entities, the world and God. That is why it is concluded in the note to verse 1082 that no one is truly an atheist. Yet who is the real theist? All who say that God exists are not real theists. Only the *Jnani*, who has realized himself to be the supreme

Self, having given up the wrong knowledge that he is an individual or *jiva*, is fit to be called a real theist [*Astika*]. Thus the beauty of verse 1082 and 1084 lies in their final conclusion, namely that anyone who cannot deny his own existence is not an atheist, and that anyone who has not realized Self is not a theist.

39 Beginningless Freedom From Impurity

(Anadi Mala Mukta Tiran)

1085. Since the darkness of the delusion of [identifying] the body [as 'I'] has never existed [either in the past, present or future] for Him who knows His real nature, which is the sun of true knowledge [*mey-jnana*], and who has the space [of consciousness] as His body, know that the darkness [of ignorance or *ajnana*] exists only for him who is blinded by [identifying] the body [as 'I'].

Sadhu Om: It is only according to the outlook of the *jiva*, the unreal soul, that it is said in *sastras* that bondage exists in the form of impurities such as ego, *maya*, the darkness of ignorance, and so on, and that liberation will be attained when such bondage is removed by *sadhana* and by divine Grace. However, in this chapter it is revealed that, since this *jiva* is only a non-existent and false entity, for you, who are Self, the reality, there never exists any such thing as impurity, *maya* or bondage, and that freedom from impurity [*mala-mukti*] is your beginningless real nature [*anadi swabhava*].

1086. The enquiry which should be done and the *Jnana* which should be attained, are applicable only to the *jiva,* who is afflicted by the delusion of attachment [to the body as 'I']. The delusion of wrong knowledge [*mala bodha*] is not applicable to [the *Jnani*, who is] the non-dual Self, which is devoid of delusion and free without beginning from impurity [*mala*].

1087. Is it possible for Self, which exists pervading everywhere as the real essence [*nija rasam*], to be bound by *maya*, which is a false appearance? [Therefore] do not be perturbed as if you were bound, [but instead] calmly enquire and calmly know [this truth].

1088. Why are you unnecessarily in a turmoil by mentally

thinking yourself to be the limit of the adjunct [the body]? Know that your reality [Self] exists [and shines] unobstructed even in sleep, where you merge devoid of [any such] mixing adjunct, [and thereby be free from misery].

40 The Life Lived in Accordance with Reality

(Sat-Achara Vazhkkai Tiran)

1089. O men who wish to live for ever, you do not know what is the way to live [thus]. Seeing a day-dream through the [darkness of] delusion which sprouts out from the void [of *maya*], you are proud to think and argue that that which is fallen [your present fallen life, your so-called waking state] is the [real] life. [By clinging to the Self-consciousness 'I am' and by thus] piercing through the void [which is the cause for the false delusion of this waking state], achieve the real life [the ever-imperishable state of Self].

1090. Observance of being indifferent towards everything by preventing the wicked anger and desire so that the confusion of the defective mind-illusion [*mana-maya*] may be destroyed, alone is the best life lived in accordance with reality [*sat-achara vazhkkai*]. Observe [such a life].

1091. The true, love-suffused life of abiding unobstructedly in the heart as one's own reality, alone is the beauty of *Jnana*, the enjoyment of the nature of [Siva-*swarupa-bhoga*], in which the unreal and delusive ego, which prevailed [formerly], has been destroyed.

1092. The *Jnani*, who shines as the intense beauty [or happiness] of Self, living the majestic life of indifference [*udasina*], having placed his entire burden at the Feet of Lord Siva, alone is truly beautiful [or happy] and fortunate.

1093. Bliss will surge forth in the heart which is soaked in the experience of the love-suffused true knowledge [*mey-jnana*]. Misery-creating, delusion-caused desire will not exist there. That extremely pure natural life of Self will be full of peace.

1094. That which is worthy to have as [one's] target is Self, the knowledge which is pure bliss. The perfect life is for one to exist directly as that [Self], abiding in the heart through the unforgettable knowledge ['I am'].

1095. The divine life [of abiding as Self] alone is the life of supreme reality. On the other hand, life in the world which is seen, is a life of delusion. What an illusion [*maya*] it is to live a life of fear [fearing death]. Is not that [life of fear] merely [one's] drowning in the play of the mind-illusion [*mano-maya*]?

1096. No *tapas* is needed for those who abide [firmly in Self] devoid of the *jiva*-mischief of catching the world of delusive [names and] forms by the attention which springs upon the petty sense-objects [on account of] believing the world which is seen through the five senses to be real.

Sadhu Om: What is meant in this verse by the words 'jiva-mischief' [*uyir-cheshtai*] is only the extroverted activity [*pravritti*] of the mind going out towards the world through the five senses. The real 'observance of reality' [*sat-achara*] is to prevent the mind from thus running after second and third persons and to make it abide instead in Self, the real first-person consciousness.

1097. For those who are established in Grace and who experience [or rule] all the worlds as Self, having lost the life of the rising ego and having conquered the dyads such as pain and pleasure, no [other] *tapas* need be done.

Sadhu Om: In order to do any kind of *tapas*, an ego or individual 'I' must rise as the doer. But the perfect fruit of all *tapas* is the destruction of this 'I'. Once the 'I' is destroyed, what other tapas is to be done and who is to do it? That is why, in order to establish that any *yoga* other than the destruction of the ego is useless, Sri Tayumanuvar sang, "When you remain still [*summa irukka*], bliss will surge forth; why then [to do any] such illusory *yoga* [*maya-yoga*]? Is it possible [to attain bliss] by your objective attention? Say no more, O *karma-nishtha* [one immersed in *karma*], O you small child."

41 Formlessness

(Nishkala Tiran)

1098. If oneself is a form [the body], even Self, the source who is the Lord, will also appear in that manner [i.e. will also appear as a form]. If oneself is not a form, since there cannot be knowledge of other things [in that state], will that statement [that God has a form] be correct?

Sadhu Om: This chapter deals with the question of whether or not God has a form. So long as one thinks that one has a name and form, the body, one must accept that God also has a name and form. Only after one has lost one's ego-sense, 'I am the body', can one know God as formless. Till then, one should not rise to argue either that God has form or that He has no form. Verse 4 of *Ulladu Narpadu* is also to be read here.

1099. He [God] assumes [any] form imagined by the devotee through repeated thinking in prolonged meditation [*bhavana*]. Though He [thus] assumes endless names and forms by [His seemingly identifying Himself with] illusory adjuncts [*maya-upadhi*], the real formless consciousness alone is Hara [God].

Sadhu Om: The *jiva* projects his own *vasanas*, which lie stored in his *chittam*, through the five senses and sees them outside as the world of names and forms. Visions of God in name and form are also seen in the same manner. Sri Bhagavan used to explain that even the *viswarupa darshan* [the vision of the cosmic form of God] shown by Sri Krishna to Arjuna in the Bhagavan Gita was only a projection of Arjuna's own *vasanas*. Sri Krishna gave Arjuna divine sight [*divya-drishti*] to enable him to see in Him the auspicious ideas [*bhavanas*] about God which Arjuna already had stored in the form of *vasanas* within his *chittam*. This *divya-drishti* was not *jnana-drishti*, as some commentators have wrongly stated, but was only the ability to project certain auspicious *vasanas* which existed in a subtle form in his *chittam* and to see them as gross objects outside. In *jnana-drishti*, *Jnana* alone will shine and no names and forms will be seen. What Sri Krishna said was only, "*I give you the divine eye*" [*divyam dadami te chakshuh* – XI.8]. Moreover, He

said, "*See in me whatever else you want to see*" [*yach chanyad drashtum ichchasi* – XI. 7], and not, "See me as I really am"! What is to be understood here is that Sri Krishna simply enabled Arjuna to project and see in a gross form the past ideas [*bhavanas*] about the names and forms of God which were already stored within his *chittam*.

1100. Being still and attending to the supreme reality [Self] by means of the *para-vak* [the supreme word 'I-I'] uttered by the heart, alone is praising the perfect primal Supreme, which is the inner light [of knowledge] that is shining in the heart and that is devoid of names and forms, which are unreal illusions like the blueness of the sky.

Sadhu Om: *Atma-anusandhana*, the state of attention to and abiding as Self, alone is the perfect way of praising God [see verses 730 and B13, where it is said that *atma-anusandhana* is the supreme devotion to God]. Why? What is the aim of all praises or *stotras*? Is it not to glorify the real greatness of the Lord? The only way to glorify the greatness of the Lord permanently and perfectly is to make the ego merge into Self so that it will not rise again. That is, since the real greatness of God lies in the fact that He alone exists, and since that perfect state of oneness is marred by the rising of the ego [being seemingly divided into two separate entities, the soul and God], only when one abides in Self and thereby prevents the ego from rising, does the real greatness of God shine in all its glory. Therefore, the perfect way of praising God is only to abide in Self without the least rising of the ego.

1101. The heart of any kind of praise [*stuti*] sung by those who are observing such *Jnana-achara* [i.e. by *Jnanis*, who are ever remaining still and attending to the supreme as described in the previous verse] is only that pure supreme reality [Self], and is not in any way limited to [a particular] name and form.

Sadhu Om: Though *Jnanis* praise God in name and form, it should be understood that what they are really praising is only Self, the nameless and formless supreme reality. It should not be thought that their praises are limited to any particular name and form. From

this verse it is clear that whenever Sri Bhagavan uses the names 'Annamalai' or 'Arunachala' in works such as *Sri Arunachala Stuti Panchakam*, He is in fact referring only to Self. Similarly, Lord Siva who is praised in the verses of Saivite Saints such as Jnanasambandhar, and Lord Vishnu who is praised by Vaishnavite Saints such as the Azhwars, are only Self itself.

Sri Muruganar: The true object of any kind of praise [*stotra*] sung by Sages, who observe *Jnana-achara* in the form of Self-abidance [*atma-anusandhana*], is only that supreme reality which transcends mental conception, and not any particular name and form which they handle only as symbols. Though in a superficial view those *stotras* appear to be concerned with many different religions, those who can comprehend with deep insight, will not fail to perceive the common nature of impartiality with which they [the sages] behave devoid of that [concern with any particular religion].

1102. The raising of the gracious Foot of Lord Nataraja, who dances the loving enquiry, [thereby] embracing His devotees so that they may reach the Heart, is a new and wonderful mystery, just like the moon and the sun uniting together.

Michael James: The Self-enquiry done with great love by a devotee is nothing but the functioning of the Lord's Grace within him. Hence it is metaphorically said in this verse that the Lord Himself dances the loving Self-enquiry. The rising of the *sphurana* 'I-I', which enchants and embraces the devotee's mind, thereby leading it to the Heart, is here likened to the Lord raising His Foot at the climax of His dance. This rising of the *sphurana* is a new and wonderful experience, and it is here likened to the moon and the sun uniting or being wedded together because the devotee's mind is a reflected light, like the light of the moon, while the Heart is the original light or consciousness, like the light of the sun, and hence the merging of the mind into the Heart is similar to the moonlight uniting with and merging into the sunlight.

This verse thus reveals that the true significance of the form of Lord Nataraja is only the formless experience of the *sphurana* 'I-I'. See also verse 1054.

1103. Being deluded in this life, wandering around the

whole world and experiencing misery [on account of one's desiring so many things], is foolish. Abide in the Feet of the Supreme Siva, the [state of] Silence which is *Sadasiva* and which destroys the movements [*chalanas*] caused by the ego.

1104. Except those who subside [and abide] in the Heart with consciousness [with remembrance of the existence-consciousness 'I am'], no one can attain the flawless state of reality, [because] the reality is veiled by the mind's forgetfulness and thinking in sleep and in waking respectively.

42 One who Abides in the Natural State

(Sahaja Nishthar Tiran)

1105. The *Jnani*, the unchanging one, who is sleeping naturally within the body, does not know His activities [*vyavahara*] in the world, His absorption [*nishtha*] and His sleep, just as one who is sleeping in the cart does not know the moving of the cart, its standing still and its lying [with the bullocks unyoked].

Michael James: The above verse by Sri Muruganar was rewritten by Sri Bhagavan in the form of the following verse, which is also included in *Ulladu Narpadu – Anubandham* as verse 31.

B21. To the knower of the reality [*mey-jnani*], who is asleep within the fleshy body, which is [like] a cart, His activities [in waking and in dream], His absorption [*nishtha*] and His sleep are similar to the moving of the cart, its standing still and the cart being unyoked, to one who is sleeping in the cart.

Sadhu Om: The bodily life of a *Jnani* appears to be real only in the outlook of others. Thus ignorant people [*ajnanis*] think, "This *Jnani* is performing activities here in the waking state". But since the *Jnani* is in truth bodiless, He does not know those activities; for Him the body and its activities are completely non-existent. Such is the teaching given in this verse. Just as the traveller who is sleeping in a bullock-cart does not know the movement of the cart, and just as a sleeping child does not know that it is taking food [see

verse 1140], so the *Jnani* does not know the state in which the body, senses and mind are active.

When the body, senses and mind of a *Jnani* remain without activities [*pravrittis*], people think, “This *Jnani* is in *samadhi*”. This is similar to the state in which the bullocks remain yoked to the cart but stand without moving. Even this state of *samadhi* or *nishtha* is not known to the *Jnani*; for Him it is completely non-existent.

When people think, “This *Jnani* is sleeping”, this state of seeming sleep in which His body, senses and mind appear to be unconscious, is similar to the cart lying with the bullocks unyoked. Just as even the cart’s lying unyoked is not known to the traveller sleeping in the cart, so even the state of sleep is not known to the *Jnani*; for Him this state is completely non-existent.

Therefore, these three different states in the life of a *Jnani* appear to exist only in the wrong outlook of *ajnanis*, who see the bodiless *Jnani* as a body. For the *Jnani*, the state of activity [waking and dream], the state of *samadhi* and the state of sleep do not in reality exist at all. That is why Sri Bhagavan says in verse 31 of *Ulladu Narpadu*, “Who can and how to conceive what His [the *Jnani’s*] state is?”

1106. The pure mind of the *Jnani*, which exists and shines as the witness [who is unattached to anything], is a clear mirror which reflects all the defective thoughts of the perverted minds of others [who come near Him] and which [thus] deludes the minds of people by making Him [the *Jnani*] appear to be defective.

1107. To the eyes of those [ignorant people] who are deluded by the sense of doership [*kartritva*], the *Sahaja Jnani*, who lives transcending even the *sattva-guna*, may sometimes appear like one who has much deceptive *rajo-guna*. On account of that, do not doubt [their *Jnana*, because the *rajo-guna* is merely a reflection of the rajasic thoughts of the onlooker].

1108. If one does wrong to a Great One, a *Jivan-mukta*, who shines and is known as treasure of purity, one will earn and carry as a burden vast blame and sins for this life and future lives [that is, blame to be experi-

enced in this life and sins whose fruits are to be experienced in future lives].

1109. Low-minded people do wrong in the same manner both to bad people and to great Sages, not knowing them to be different, just like a dog which lives by licking in the same manner both the oil-expeller and the Siva-*lingam*, not knowing [the difference between them].

Michael James: After *puja* has been performed, oil will remain on the surface of the *Siva-lingam*. Therefore, being ignorant of the sanctity of the *Siva-lingam*, stray dogs will sometimes come and lick the oil from it in the same way that they lick the oil spilt on the outside of an oil-expeller. Similarly, being ignorant of the real greatness of the *Jnani*, low-minded people will behave towards Him in the same wrong and disrespectful way that they behave towards even bad people.

1110. Though a dog barks at the sun, the insult will not affect the sun. [Similarly] ignorant people's petty words of blame [censure, ridicule or slander] will not touch one who has attained the light of true knowledge [*mey-jnana*], which is bright like the sun.

43 One who Firmly Abides as Pure Consciousness

(Sthita Prajnar Tiran)

1111. The *Jnani* [literally, the one who is the space of consciousness], who ever abides only as the bright knowledge [the mere consciousness 'I am'] devoid of the difference of the transitory [states of] attention of introversion and extroversion, alone is the immutable *sthita-prajna* [the one who firmly abides as the immutable pure consciousness].

Sadhu Om: He who shines devoid of the dual feeling 'in' and 'out' and who does not experience the least sense of difference between the state of absorption [*samadhi*] attained through introversion [*ahamukka*] and the state of activity [*vyavahara*] which results from extroversion [*bahirmukka*], alone is a *sthita-prajna* [one who firmly abides as pure consciousness] or a *dridha-jnani* [one who has attained steadfast knowledge]. He who experiences

Self only in the state of *samadhi* and who experiences the body and world when he is not in *samadhi*, is only an aspirant [*abhyasi*] and not a *sthita-prajna*. Since this difference in experience does not exist for the *sthita-prajna*, He ever remains in *sahaja-nishtha* [the natural state of Self-abidance].

1112. Know that He who, through the true knowledge of the Heart, shines as the nature of Siva [Siva-*swarupa*], which is Self and which is devoid of 'I' [the ego], is the perfectly silent *sthita-prajna*, who is not moved by anything.

Sadhu Om: Of all movements [*chalanas* and *vrittis*], the rising of the ego as 'I am this body' is the first. Therefore, all other kinds of movement [*chalana*] will naturally become non-existent for Him who has attained the state of Silence by subsiding and knowing Himself to be the motionless [*achala*] Siva, who is Self and who is completely devoid of even the least rising of the ego, 'I am this'. Such a steadfast state of knowledge alone is the state of *sthita-prajnatvam* [firm abidance as pure consciousness].

44 One who has Severed the Knot

(Granthi Bhedittar Tiran)

1113. Just as the whirling-minded ignorant people [*ajnanis*] see [only] the world, which is a bundle of sense-objects, everywhere due to [their] objective knowledge [the knowledge by which they see everything as second and third persons, as objects other than themselves], so the Sage who abides [as Self] having severed the knot [the *chit-jada-granthi* or ego] and having [thereby] given up [the objective knowledge] sees [only] Self, the basic consciousness, existing and shining everywhere.

1114. He alone is a Buddha [a Sage or *Atma-jnani*] who ever exists and shines as the [self-luminous] sun [of *Jnana*] and in front of whom the dual world-appearance, which appears as a wonder having so many differences, does not appear and becomes [completely] non-existent.

1115. Know that the knower of reality [*mey-jnani*], who is

well established in the Heart and who is always contentedly rejoicing in the greatness of Self, will neither think the world to be a dense [unreal] delusion, nor will think it to be other than Himself.

Michael James: The statement which is made in *Sri Ramana Gita*, chapter 1, verse 11, and which is reiterated in this present verse, namely that the *Jnani* does not consider the world either to be unreal or to be other than Himself, has been misinterpreted by some people to support their wrong belief that the world of names and forms is real as such. However, the fact that such an interpretation is wrong is made clear in the previous verse of this work, where it is stated that the dual world-appearance (i.e. the world of names and forms) is non-existent to the *Buddha* or *Jnani*, and also in the next two verses of this work, where it is stated that the *Jnani* knows that consciousness is the sole reality of the world, and that in the state of *Jnana* or pure consciousness nothing exists except that pure consciousness.

That is, the *Jnani* does not experience Himself to be the body, which is a mere name and form, but only to be Self, which is existence-consciousness-bliss (*sat-chit-ananda*), and hence, according to the principle established in verse 4 of *Ulladu Narpadu*, He does not see the world as names and forms but only as Himself, the nameless and formless pure consciousness or *sat-chit-ananda* (see *Ulladu Narpadu* verse 18, " ... to those who have known Self, the reality shines <u>devoid of form</u> as the substratum of the world ...").

Thus, since the *Jnani* knows that He, the reality, alone exists, and that the unreal names and forms are completely non-existent, He cannot see the world as something unreal or other than Himself. On the other hand, since the *ajnani* sees the world as names and forms, it is right and necessary for him to discriminate between the unreal names and forms and the real *sat-chit-ananda*, and to regard the world of names and forms as an unreal delusion created by the mind, which is itself an unreal and non-existent entity. Refer here to *Maharshi's Gospel*, Book Two, chapter 3 (8th ed. p. 60), where Sri Bhagavan says, "There is no alternative for you but to accept the world as unreal, if you are seeking the Truth and the Truth alone". Refer also to verses 50 and 51 of this work, where Sri Bhagavan says that the statement 'the

world is real' can be correctly understood only by the *Jnani* and not by the *ajnani*.

1116. The *Jnani* knows the whole world, which appears in consciousness, to be of the nature of consciousness [the Self]. He, the fortunate one, will [always] abide in Self, knowing that other than consciousness [the Self] there is no reality for the world.

1117. He whose mind has been destroyed, having drowned in the non-dual whole [*advaita-purna*], will never be perturbed in this unreal life of duality, [because] in that supreme state of Grace, [the state of] Self, which is pure consciousness [unmixed with any adjuncts such as 'this'], nothing such as 'I' [the ego or subject] and 'this' [the world or object] exists except that [Self, the pure consciousness 'I am'].

Michael James: The last line may also be translated as, 'nothing [no adjunct-feeling] such as "I am this" exists'.

In the state of pure consciousness, nothing exists except that pure consciousness, 'I am'. Therefore, in the true outlook of the *Jnani*, who ever abides as pure consciousness, nothing exists as 'I' [the ego] or as 'this' [the world].

1118. Since the *Jnani* has severed the knot of doership [*kartritva*], He does not see [any] action which must be done [by Him]. Since in His state of *Jnana* not even an atom will appear to be an insentient other object [an insentient object other than Himself], not even an atom of doubt or delusion will arise [for Him].

1119. Though the mind [of a *Jnani*] which has been enchanted by the true light [of Self-knowledge] is [seemingly] engaged as before in the five senses, which know taste, smell, sight, sound and touch, it has [in fact] been severed [destroyed] by the power of intense Self-enquiry.

1120. He who has attained the life of a *Jnani* in the heart, will not derive even the least pleasure from the life of the fleshy body and the petty [five] senses. Is not that

life of Silence itself the unlimited and unbroken experience of [the bliss of] the supreme *Brahman*?

Michael James: Therefore, in front of that unlimited bliss, will not the petty pleasure derived through the five senses become utterly insignificant?

1121. Just as a river which has joined and become one with the wavy ocean will not become separate [from the ocean] by changing [itself once again into a river], so for the *jiva* which has reached [and become one with] Self, which is the form of knowledge, there will be no rebirth on account of its being deluded.

Sadhu Om: Since the very nature of Self is knowledge or *Jnana*, and since birth is nothing but the wrong knowledge or ignorance 'I am the body', which appears to exist only on account of delusion or forgetfulness of Self, the soul which has attained true Self-knowledge will never be born again.

1122. Among those whose minds are possessed with forgetfulness [of Self], those who are born will die and those who die will be born [again]. [But] know that those whose minds are dead, having known the glorious supreme reality, will remain only there in [that] elevated state [of reality], devoid of [both] birth and death.

1123. He who has seen [Himself to be] existence-consciousness [*sat-chit*], has seen *Sadasiva*; He has seen the destruction of fear-creating duality; He has seen His natural state, which is the pure state of *turiya*; He is the Great One; He will not see birth [ever again].

1124. If at one time previously the original knot [the ego] has been severed, one will not be bound again at any time. This [state of liberation], which is one's own nature, alone is the state of Godhood; this alone is the powerful Lordship; this alone is the abundant peace. Know thus.

45 The Greatness of the Sage

(Sandror Matchi Tiran)

1125. When He who has [realized] God [*mahesan*] within as the great reality [as His own Self] and who does not have even a single attachment, walks, know that that God, who exists and shines as the Protector from danger, is walking.

Sadhu Om: This verse can be interpreted in the following two ways:

a) When the *Jnani* walks, know that it is God Himself who is walking in the form of that *Jnani*.

b) When the *Jnani* walks, know that God Himself is walking behind Him to protect His body from danger.

The idea expressed in version (b) is also expressed in a verse of *Kurundirattu* which Sri Bhagavan sometimes used to refer to [see *My Recollections of Bhagavan Sri Ramana* by Devaraja Mudaliar, 1970 edition, pp. 31 to 32].

1126. He [the *Jnani*] who abides as Siva Himself, having destroyed the mind [the limited knowledge 'I am so-and-so'], is residing equally within all *jivas* [as their real Self, the unlimited knowledge 'I am']. [Therefore] by one's meditating upon the form [*swarupa*] of Him, who clearly shines as a *Mukta*, [by His Grace] the true light [of Self-knowledge] will shine forth from within [as the *sphurana* 'I-I'].

Michael James: The *swarupa* of the *Jnani* may here be taken to mean either His physical form or His true nature. But since the true nature of the *Jnani* is Self, one's own true nature, which is common to all (*samanya*), and since this verse points to the *swarupa* of the *Jnani* in particular (*visesha*), it is more fitting here to take the word *'swarupa'* to mean His physical form. Moreover, when we see the other verses in this chapter, we can understand that they are all concerned with the greatness of the *Jnani's* physical form and the priceless benefit to be gained by associating with that form.

Sri Bhagavan often used to extol the great efficacy of *sat-sang* (association or contact with a *Jnani*), and He also used to

point out that mental contact is better than mere physical contact (see *Day by Day*, 9-3-46). That is why Sri Bhagavan assures in this verse that by one's thinking of the *Jnani's* form, the true light of Self-knowledge will shine forth from within. That is also the reason why Sri Bhagavan affirmed that by one's merely thinking of the form of Arunachala, *Mukti* would be attained. Therefore, devotees need not fear that Sri Bhagavan's *sat-sang* is no longer available now that His physical form has passed away; His *sat-sang* is always available to those who turn their mind towards Him.

Sri Muruganar: The *swarupa* of a *Mukta* resides as the *swarupa* of Siva in all *jivas*. In order to reveal that the reason why the true light will shine forth of its own accord in the heart of those who practice meditation upon His *swarupa*, it is said, "He who abides as Siva Himself", and, "He is residing equally within all *jivas*".

1127. The glance of Him [the *Jnani*] who is rich in true knowledge [*mey-jnana*], which is the supreme life that surges like the rising of a hundred suns without ever diminishing, will easily bestow the unequalled *Jnana* upon those who bathe in it, thereby saving them and leading them to the goal of immortality.

Michael James: Muruganar indicated that the following verse by Bhagavan should be included here. It originally appeared as verse 7 of the appendix to *Guru Vachaka Kovai*.

Through lecturers, scriptures and virtuous deeds, no state can be attained equal to [that state which is attained by] the clue [of Self-enquiry or Self-attention] which is clearly attained within by association with a *Sadhu* [one who abides as the reality or *sat*]. [Knowing this for certain,] go.

In this verse Sri Bhagavan expresses in a two-line metre (*kural-venba*) the same idea which He expressed in a four-line metre (*venba*) in verse 2 of *Ulladu Narpadu – Anubandham*.

1128. Those [the *Jnanis*] whose minds are soaked in the essence of the enjoyment of Siva [Siva-*bhoga-rasam*], the true knowledge [*mey-jnana*] which exists and shines as the *eka-rasam* [the one essence, the non-dual Self], will convert the void [the mind of the *jiva*], which is a burning desert, the essence of delu-

sion [*moha-rasam*], into a [cool and fertile] place [which yields the fruits of *bhakti* and *Jnana* and] which is loved even by gods.

1129. The minds of all those who come to the *Jnani*, whose heart is brimming over with peace, will become blissful [being filled with His peace]. [For] is not His cool [moonlike] face, which is soaked with joy, the [fully blossomed] red lotus [of *Jnana*] to which the bees [the devotees] are attracted?

46 The Glory of the Great One

(Periyar Matchi Tiran)

1130. If he does holy service to a Great One [a *Jnani*], the deluded soul will lose his delusion, the well-established and permanent wealth of Grace will be attained [by him] in the heart, and he will [thereby] live as the most fortunate person.

47 One whose *Vasanas* are Dead

(Vasanai Mandar Tiran)

1131. Since agitation [or confusion] will never rise without [the rising of] the feeling 'I am only the body' [the ego] in the heart, one whose tendencies [*vasanas*] – [which are the form of] the ego or mind – are dead will not be mentally agitated [or confused] even in dream.

1132. Low creatures such as four-legged animals and birds [always] live with agitated [or wandering] minds. [But] the enlightened one [the *Jnani*], whose mind lives devoid of any thought [as mere existence-consciousness 'I am'], [alone] is the one who [really] lives.

Michael James: The silent life in which the mind is dead, alone is the life fit for a man to live; the life of a man whose mind is wandering, is no better than the life of birds and beasts.

1133. Though they undertake and do many actions [*vyvaharas*], those whose mental tendencies [*mana-vasanas*] are dead are just like one who sits for a

long time [seemingly] listening to puranic stories but who has [in fact] directed his mind far away.

1134. Though they are [sitting] quiet, if their mental tendencies [*mana-vasanas*] are not destroyed they are indeed those who have done everything as the doer, just like one who [suffers by thinking] in dream [that he] has climbed a hill and is falling head-first over a precipice, though [in fact his body is] lying quietly [sleeping on his bed].

Michael James: The ideas expressed in the above two verses by Sri Muruganar, which are also expressed in the eleventh chapter of *Vichara Sangraham*, were summarized by Sri Bhagavan in the following verse, which is also included in *Ulladu Narpadu – Anubandham* as verse 30.

B22. Just like one who is [seemingly] listening to a story when his mind has [in fact] gone far away, the mind [of the *Jnani*] in which the *vasanas* have been erased, has not done [anything] though [seemingly] it has done [many things]. [On the other hand] the mind [of the *ajnani*] which is soaked with them [the *vasanas*], has done [many things] though [seemingly] it has not done [anything], [just like] one who [thinks] in dream [that he] has climbed a hill and is falling over a precipice, though [in fact his body is] lying motionless here [sleeping on his bed].

Sadhu Om: Though a person may appear to an onlooker to be sitting and listening to a story, if his mind is not attending to the story but is absorbed in thinking of some other matters, he is not in fact hearing the story. Similarly, though a *Jnani* may appear to us onlookers to be engaged in many activities, since His *vasanas* have been destroyed and since He has therefore lost the sense of doership, He is in fact not doing anything [refer also to verses 1105, B21, 1140 and 1165].

Though a sleeping person's body is seen to be lying quietly in one place, he may be suffering due to his dreaming, believing that he has climbed a hill and is falling over a precipice. Similarly, though an *ajnani's* body is seen to be sitting still for a long time in meditation or *samadhi*, and though he appears to have given up all

activities, since his tendencies towards action [*karma-vasanas*] have not been destroyed and since he therefore retains the sense of doership, he is in fact one who is doing all kinds of *karmas* and experiencing their fruits.

48 The Liberated One

(Jivan-Muktar Tiran)

1135-1136. "Though their doership has been destroyed, is it proper to call those who are wearing a body, who are eating [making a living] by other activities and who are doing actions [*karma-bandha*] 'a liberated one'? We also see that, being victims to the allotted *karma* [i.e. to their *prarabdha karma*], even those Great Ones suffer, [so how can it be said that they are free from the experience of pleasure and pain, which are the results of action?]" If it be asked thus, [the reply is that] their sufferings are merely according to the outlook [*drishti*] of the onlookers [the *ajnanis*]; tell me, do they [the *Jivan-muktas*] say that they are suffering?

Sadhu Om: Since the *ajnani* thinks himself to be a body [a separate, finite individual], he cannot but see even the *Jnani* as a body; however, in His own outlook the *Jnani* knows Himself to be the Infinite Self, which is bodiless and completely devoid of individuality. Due to their defective outlook [*dosha-drishti*], people see the *Jnani* as a doer [*karta*] of actions and as the experiencer [*bhokta*] of their fruits, which are allotted as *prarabdha*. But since the *Jnani* is like the infinite and indivisible space, which has no separate individuality, He does not feel that He is doing any actions or that He is either enjoying or suffering their fruits. Having transcended the dyad of pleasure and pain, He is both a non-doer [*akarta*] and a non-experiencer [*abhokta*]. Thus for the *Jnani* none of the three *karmas* [*agamya*, *sanchita* and *prarabdha*] exist even in the least. Refer here to verses 1144 and B23, and to verse 33 of *Ulladu Narpadu – Anubandham*.

Sri Bhagavan once revealed His own experience by saying, "The radio sings and speaks, but if you open it you will find no one inside. Similarly, my existence is like the space; though this body speaks like the radio, there is no one inside as a doer."

1137. When those Great Ones [the *jivan-muktas*] experience the transcendent reality [Self] alone as their own form [*swarupa*], these insentient people [the *ajnanis*, who identify the insentient body as 'I'] seeing them [the *Jivan-muktas*] as the form of the suffering body, is only according to the outlook of the onlookers [these *ajnanis*].

1138. Know that the merit [or *punya* which results from the good deeds which *jivan-muktas* may seem to do] goes to those who approach and praise with love [those] liberated Great Ones, who, having lost the sense of doership, live as ordained by God, and that the demerit [or *papa* which results from the sins which *jivan-muktas* may seem to do] goes to those who vilify instead of praising them.

Michael James: Since the bodily life of a *Jivan-mukta* is a mere appearance which exists only in the wrong outlook of the *ajnani*, all the actions of His body, speech and mind are also a mere appearance. Therefore, since such actions do not exist in His outlook, He cannot be affected in any way by their results.

1139. If it be asked, "If they [the *Jivan-muktas*] have lost the sense of doership, how can actions [of their body, speech and mind] go on? We do see [such] actions going on", rest assured that, since [their] inner attachments have died, they have God Himself residing in their heart and doing [all those actions].

Sadhu Om: As mentioned in the note to verse 1136, Sri Bhagavan once compared the body of a *Jivan-mukta* to a radio, which sings and speaks but which has no one inside it. Just as that which makes the radio sing or speak is the broadcasting station, which is in some distance place, so the doer who is speaking and acting in the body of a *Jnani* is God Himself.

1140. The actions of the great *Jivan-muktas* in the intoxication of Silence, which is devoid of all 'I' and 'mine', are like children's eating in very deep sleep when made to sit up and take food.

Sadhu Om: Being intoxicated by their blissful state of deep sleep, those children have no sense of doership, 'I am eating', and no sense of experiencership, 'This food is tasty', and yet they perform the action of eating. Similarly, being intoxicated by their blissful state of Silence, the state of sleepless sleep, *Jnanis* have no sense of doership or experiencership even though they may seem to perform actions. Just as the child is completely unaware of its eating, so the *Jnani* is completely unaware of all the actions of His body, speech and mind. Refer here to verses 1105, B21, 1133, B22, 1148. B24 and 1165.

1141. Just as a coolie carries a burden and happily places it down at the destination, so also the great knower of reality [*mey-jnani*] will be happy to place down the burden of this body.

Sadhu Om: A coolie will never feel any attachment in the form of 'I' or 'mine' towards the burden he is carrying. Similarly, a *Jnani* will never feel any attachment towards His body either in the form 'I am this body' or in the form 'this body is mine'. Just as a leaf-plate is fit only to be discarded after one has taken food on it, so the body is fit only to be discarded after Self-knowledge – the fruit which is to be gained by living in the body – has been attained. By the death of the body, the *Jnani* will incur no loss and will feel no sorrow. The purpose of the present verse is only to teach this truth, and it should not be taken to mean either that the *Jnani* is bound by the body until the time of death, or that He feels the body to be an unwanted burden, or that He is suffering by living in the body.

Michael James: Verse 8 of the appendix to *Guru Vachaka Kovai – Urai* is included here. In this verse Sri Bhagavan says:

> **He who has known Self will discard the body just like [one discards] a leaf after food has been eaten [from it].**

In this two-line verse Sri Bhagavan has summarized the idea expressed in a four-line verse in a Tamil work called *Prabhulingalila*, chapter 12, verse 11, by Sivaprakasa Swamigal. Refer to *Letters from Sri Ramanasramam*, p. 208, for more details. In the last days of His bodily life, when devotees were praying to Him, "O Bhagavan, you should live in this body for many more years," Sri Bhagavan used to refer to this verse in order to make them understand

that, since there is no further benefit to be gained by living in the body after Self-knowledge has been attained, it is fit only to be discarded.

1142. Will the wave of the deep ocean allow a small creature which has fallen [into it] and which is on the point of death, to raise up its head? [Likewise] in the face of the full flood of the Silence of true knowledge [*mey-jnana-mouna*], is it possible for the ego, 'I am the base and fleshy body', to rise?

Sadhu Om: The experience of a *Jivan-mukta* is a great surging flood of the Silence of *Jnana*. In that limitless surge of Silence, the ego can never rise again, and hence it is certain that for a *Jivan-mukta* there will be no rebirth [no re-rising of the ego].

1143. Can the mind [of the *Jnani*] which has known the greatness of its own Self, having lost the 'I' [the ego, whose form is 'I am this'], be deluded by the deceptive and delusive appearance [of this unreal world]? Can the perception of the unreal appearance of duality be real in the midst of the wonderful and pure space of *turiya* [the nameless and formless space of pure consciousness]?

1144. For a *jiva* who is suffering due to dying and taking birth, the most worthy thing to do and to attain with full love, is [to have] the experience of the great state of *Jivan-mukta*, having subsided and known [its own true nature], so that the rising [of the ego], which is the coming to life [of the *jiva*] because of [its] forgetting its own reality [Self], may die.

Michael James: The rising of the ego as 'I am so-and-so', which happens due to forgetfulness of Self, is the birth of the *jiva*. So that this *jiva* may die and so that the unending misery of birth and death may thereby come to an end, the most worthy thing for the *jiva* to do is to attend to itself with great love and thus know its own true nature [Self], and thereby to subside into its source and attain the experience of *Jivan-mukti*.

This verse may be read along with verses 500 and 501 in the chapter concerning what is worthy to be done.

1145. Tell me, when their husband, who is the doer, dies – the sense of doership [*kartritva*] having been destroyed – instead of the wives, who are his three *karmas*, becoming widows altogether, can two of them become widows and one of them remain unwidowed?

Sadhu Om: The *jiva* is not only the doer of the *karmas*, but also the experiencer of their fruits. Therefore, when the *jiva* is destroyed by Self-knowledge, all the three *karmas* [*agamya*, *sanchita* and *prarabdha*] will become non-existent, since there is no one remaining either to do or to experience them. Hence for the *Jnani* there is no *karma* at all. Thus, when some scriptures say that *agamya* and *sanchita* are destroyed and that *prarabdha* alone will remain for the *Jnani*, their saying so is to be understood as a mere formality [*upachara*] and should not be taken to be the actual truth.

The idea expressed in the above four-line verse by Sri Muruganar, was summarized by Sri Bhagavan in the following two-line verse. Later, when this two-line verse was included in *Ulladu Narpadu – Anubandham*, Sri Bhagavan added another two lines to it.

B23. Know that just as no wife will remain unwidowed when the husband dies, all the three *karmas* will become non-existent when the doer dies.

Michael James: This verse is the last two lines of verse 33 of *Ulladu Narpadu – Anubandham*. In the first two lines of that verse Sri Bhagavan says, "To say that *sanchita* and *agamya* will not adhere to a *Jnani*, [but] that *prarabdha* does remain [to be experienced by Him], is a superficial reply to be told to the questions of others". Refer here to *The Path of Sri Ramana* - Part One, pp. 66 to 68, for a detailed explanation.

1146. To the body, which was born because of *prarabdha*, that *prarabdha* will never fail [to give fruit]. [But] the *Jivan-mukta*, who has separated Himself [from the body] by severing the *chit-jada-granthi*, has transcended *prarabdha* itself.

Sri Muruganar: The tenet of *Visishtadvaita* that *prarabdha* will not fail to give fruit even to the *Jivan-mukta*, is refuted here. How?

Since He has lost body-consciousness by the severing of the *chit-jada-granthi*, the activities of His body exist only in the outlook of others.

1147. "When [it is a fact that] the experience of [*prarabdha*] *karma* itself exists as the body, if there is no experience of [*prarabdha*] *karma* for someone, [even if he be a *Jnani*] will it [his body] not die?" – if you ask thus, tell me correctly by whom the gross body is seen?

Michael James: Is it seen by the *Jnani* Himself? Is it not seen only by the *ajnanis*?

Sadhu Om: The *Jnani*, who has no experience of *prarabdha*, does not see a body existing for Himself. Just as one's dream-body becomes non-existent as soon as one's sleep comes to an end, so, in the outlook of the *Jnani*, His body became non-existent as soon as He attained *Jnana* [that is, as soon as His experience of *prarabdha* was destroyed]. Thus the body of the *Jnani* seems to exist only in the outlook of *ajnanis*, <u>who are themselves completely non-existent in His outlook</u>. Therefore, it is meaningless to say that the body of a *Jnani* is still living.

Michael James: Verse 9 of the appendix to *Guru Vachaka Kovai – Urai* is included here. In this verse Sri Bhagavan says:

> **"If the dove caught in the hand of the hunter is let free, it will fly away even from the forest [in which it was caught], [will it not?]" If you ask thus, [the reply is that] when the hunter, turning back home, goes away [from the forest leaving the dove]), it [the dove] will remain [in the forest], since even that forest, which was [previously considered by it to be] alien, will be [found to be its] home.**

One day a devotee named K. V. Ramachandran composed a two-line verse (*kural venba*) in which he said, "If the dove caught in the hand of the hunter is let free, it will fly away even from the forest". Though this verse appears to be an affirmative statement, it was in fact intended to be a question in a metaphorical form. Here 'the hunter' means *maya*, 'the dove' means *jiva*, the letting free of

the dove means the liberation of the *jiva*, and 'the forest' means the gross body. Hence the meaning implied by K. V. Ramachandran's verse is, "If the *jiva*, which is bound by *maya*, is liberated, it will at once leave the body [in which it was bound], will it not?"

Sri Bhagavan gave His answer to this question by taking the same two-line verse and expanding it into a four-line verse (*venba*). The meaning implied by His answer is as follows, "If you ask thus, the reply is that when, by attending to 'I', *maya* [which is nothing but the mind] disappears, being found to be non-existent, the *jiva* [who has thereby realized his true nature as Self] will remain in the gross body, since even that body, which was previously considered by the *jiva* to be alien or other than itself, will be known [through the unbroken experience of *Jnana*] to be nothing but Self".

This implied meaning is made still more explicit in Tamil by the fact that Sri Bhagavan uses the words *'nadi aham'*, which means both "Turning back home" and "attending to 'I' ".

Thus the meaning of Sri Bhagavan's reply is that there is no rule that the body must die when *Jivan-mukta* is attained. Moreover, since after Self-realization nothing (neither the body nor the world) can exist as other than the single unbroken Self-consciousness, even the limited knowledge 'the body is not I', which existed during the period of *sadhana*, will be removed, and the unlimited knowledge 'the body is also I' will be attained. Verse 17 of *Ulladu Narpadu* may also be read here.

1148. One who is blinded by drunkenness does not know whether the cloth on his body remains there or has fallen down. [Likewise] the *Siddha* [i.e. *Jnani*] who knows [and is immersed in] the form of light [His own Self-consciousness], which is [limitless and subtle like] the space, does not know the connection [the living] or the removal [the death] of the unreal and insentient body.

Michael James: This verse is a translation of a Sanskrit verse in the *Bhagavatam (XI-13-36)* which Sri Bhagavan sometimes used to quote. The same idea is also expressed by Sri Bhagavan in the following verse. Refer here to *Day by Day with Bhagavan*, 9-1-46 and 18-1-46 to 21-1-46.

B24. The body is transitory [and hence unreal]. Whether [due to *prarabdha*] it is resting or moving, whether due to [*prarabdha*] *karma* it is clinging [living] or has left [died], the *Siddha* who knows Self does not know the body, just as one who is blinded by toddy-intoxication [does not know his] clothes.

Sadhu Om: Just because the words "whether it is resting or moving, whether it is living or has died" are used here, we should not conclude that for the *Jnani* a body actually is born, lives, works and dies. We should understand that for the *Jnani* there is in truth no such thing as birth, activity and death of the body, and that these seem to exist only in the wrong outlook of the *ajnani* who sees them.

1149. The form of the living body of the perfect *Jnana-mukta*, who has destroyed the ego-defect, is like a [burnt] red silk cloth, which remains without losing its appearance even though it has lost its reality, having become ashes.

Michael James: When a red silk cloth is burnt, it retains both its form and its colour, even though its substance has become ashes. Similarly, after the ego has been burnt in the fire of *Jnana*, the body of the *Jnani* will appear to remain unchanged and will seemingly continue to live and perform activities, even though His 'I am the body' consciousness (*dehatma-buddhi*) has been completely destroyed.

1150. Just as only a snake can know the legs of a snake, only a *Jnani* can know the nature of a *Jnani*. The nature of a *Jnani* cannot be known by anyone else correctly but only wrongly [literally, as *viparita*].

Sri Muruganar: Since the knowledge of one who possesses only book-knowledge is a deluded knowledge, he can see the reality only wrongly and not as it is, and hence he cannot clearly know the true nature of a *Jnani*. Even in the scriptures which give the definition [*lakshana*] of *Jivan-mukti*, it is said that *Jnanis* may appear to be madmen, ghost-possessed people or children, and that it is not possible for ignorant people [*ajnanis*], in whom the awareness of the world is not lost, to fathom them.

1151. The supreme experience [*brahmanubhava*] – which has the glory of not knowing any other thing – of the great enjoyer of the bliss of true knowledge [*mey-jnana-maha-anandi*], who has attained the state of Silence [*mouna*], the form of That [*tadakara*] which shines triumphant on the destruction of oneself [the ego], cannot be conceived by anyone whosoever.

Michael James: The idea expressed in this verse is re-expressed by Sri Bhagavan in His own words in the following verse, which is also included in *Ulladu Narpadu* as verse 31.

B25. For Him who enjoys the bliss of Self, which has risen on the destruction of himself [the ego], what single thing remains to do? He does not know anything other than Self; [therefore] who can and how to conceive what His state is?

49 The *Jnani*

(Jnaniyar Tiran)

1152. It is impossible to express the greatness of a *Jnani*. He alone knows the nature [or beauty] of His existence. He is vaster than the space; He is firmer than a mountain. Having scrutinized and destroyed the '[I am] the body' feeling, know [this truth clearly].

Sri Muruganar: So long as we have the 'I am the body' feeling [*dehatma-buddhi*], even the *Jnani* will appear to have a body and to be in bondage like us, and hence it is impossible for us to know the greatness of the *Jnani* as it is. Only when we lose this ignorance [*ajnana*], will the unbroken state [*akhanda nilai*] of the *Jnani* shine forth.

1153. Know that the Muni who has known the true light – which is Self, which remaining formless makes all [the forms of the world] shine – shining brightly and without veiling [*tirodhana*] as 'I' itself, is the king who rules [all] the heavens [such as *Brahma Loka*, *Vishnu Loka* and *Siva Loka*].

1154. The mind of the *Jnani*, who sleeps in Self, having settled down immovably in the ocean of the perfectly

natural bliss [*nir-atisaya ananda*] of the differenceless Silence of Self [*swarupa-nirvikalpa-manna*], will not sufferingly go to waste in the world.

Michael James: That is, he will not suffer in the world, being caught in the waste of the delusion of the false triads or triputis.

1155. The wise men who, having slipped down [through *pramada*] from Self, which is the [real] waking, desire the illusory dream of the world which is seen, as [if it were] the [real] waking, are different, and the wise men who are in clarity, having known Self, are different.

Sadhu Om: The word *'pulavan'* [wise man] means 'one who knows'. The first kind of wise man mentioned in this verse is the learned *ajnani*, who has only gained knowledge through the five senses, whereas the second kind is the true *Jnani* who has attained Self-knowledge. Since the knowledge gained through the five senses is a false knowledge, whereas the knowledge of Self alone is the true knowledge, these two kinds of wise men are completely different from each other.

1156. However keenly one looks into the true scriptures, they will tell one only to scrutinize oneself within oneself [and thereby to know who one really is]. The purpose of looking into a mirror is only to be happy by seeing the beautiful face of the man, is it not?

Sadhu Om: The purpose of looking into a mirror is not merely to waste one's time either in looking at the reflection or in appreciating the mirror; the purpose is only to experience the joy of seeing the beauty of one's own face. Similarly, the purpose of reading the scriptures is only to experience the true happiness of Self-knowledge. Therefore, as soon as one reads the scriptures, which reveal 'You yourself are that *Brahman'*, one should make proper use of that information and should verify the truth of it from one's own direct experience by scrutinizing and knowing oneself through the enquiry 'Who am I?'. Refer here to the work *Who am I?* where Sri Bhagavan says, "Since it is said in all the scriptures that in order to attain liberation one should control [i.e. destroy] the mind, after coming to know that mind-control alone is the final decision of the

scriptures, to read scriptures unlimitedly is fruitless" [see verse 141 of this work].

After engaging oneself in the *sadhana* of knowing Self, making research in the scriptures is of no use. Scriptures are useful only to turn us towards the path of Self-enquiry, and are of no further use to us during the time when we are engaged in practice or *nididhyasana*. This is what is meant by Sri Bhagavan in the work *Who am I?* when He said, "For Rama to know himself to be Rama, is a mirror necessary? ... All that one has learnt will at one time have to be forgotten."

1157. Among those who approach the mirror – the true *Jnana-sastras* which reveal that that which is to be known is Self – many [merely] look at the *sastras* and the big commentaries [on them], while few save themselves [as those scriptures recommend] by searching [within] and knowing their own nature [Self].

1158. If [the truth is] told, the knower of reality [*mey-jnani*] is different, and the scholar [*vijnana*] who knows the scriptures [which tell] about the true knowledge [*mey-jnana*] is different. For those who wish to sever the bondage of ignorance [*ajnana*], it is necessary to leave the scholars and to associate with those who abide as the supreme Self [*atma-para-nishthar*].

Sri Muruganar: He [Sri Bhagavan] says this because experiential knowledge [*anubhava-jnana*] cannot be attained unless one associates with those who abide as Self. The benefit which can be attained by mere *vijnana* [scriptural knowledge] is nothing but the praise and worship of the world.

1159. Know that the words [of *upadesa*] uttered by a *Jnani*, who has known the reality which supports everything by the power of [its] Grace, will always be a saving support to the souls who have been deluded for a long time under the sway of darkness [but who wish to be saved].

Sadhu Om: The reason why it is said in verse 1158 that one should leave the scholars and associate instead with those who

abide as Self is explained in this verse. Rather than in all the lectures and explanations given by scriptural scholars, in a single word uttered by a *Jnani*, who [though He may be unlearned] has known the supreme reality, there is more power of authority [the power of the light of Self] to dispel the darkness of ignorance [*ajnana*] in other *jivas*. Therefore it is instructed here that we should approach with love a *Jnani* rather than the scriptural scholars.

50 The Action of *Jnanis*

(*Jnanigal Karma Tiran*)

1160. If the verdict is that actionlessness alone is *Jnana*, [then it would mean that] the verdict is that even the actionlessness due to leprosy is *Jnana*! Know that that exalted state in which one has given up likes and dislikes for actions [and for their fruits] and which is devoid of any doership [literally, responsibility] in the mind, alone is the state of *Jnana*.

Sadhu Om: To remain without the rising of doership either in the form 'I should do actions' or in the form 'I should stop doing actions' is the true state of *Jnana*. Sri Bhagavan used to say that doing *nishkamya karma* [i.e. performing action without desire for the fruit] truly means only abiding in the state in which one has no sense of doership in the actions that are performed.

1161. For those who live in Self as the beauty devoid of thought, there is nothing to be thought of. That which is to be adhered to is only the experience of Silence [*mauna-anubhava-katchi*], [because] in [that] supreme state nothing exists to be attained other than oneself.

1162. Know that though they do many immense activities, those who have realized the majestic state of being devoid of thought, having known that the mere existence ['I am'] alone is their real nature, are non-doers [*akartas*] and [due to firmness of their knowledge 'I am he that exists, not he that does'] will not be deluded as [if they were] the doers [*kartas*].

1163. Even the renouncing of the path of *niyama* [religious duty] by great *Jivan-muktas*, who abide in their transcendental real nature [Self], having matured in the

path of *dharma*, is as beautiful as [their] observing [the path of *niyama*] in [their] outward life.

Michael James: Since the highest of all *dharmas* (duties) is *swadharma*, and since the real meaning of *swadharma* is Self-abidance, *Jivan-muktas* (that is, those who have achieved perfection in Self-abidance) are ever observing the truest and highest *dharma*. Therefore, there is no wrong even if they renounce all other *dharmas*, for their renouncing them is as glorious as their observing them.

In the outlook of *ajnanis*, some *Jiva-muktas* may appear to be doing all the *dharmas* and *karmas* prescribed in the *dharma-sastras*, while other *Jivan-muktas* may appear as if they are not observing such *dharmas* but are behaving instead like madmen, children or fools. But even their behaving so will be as beautiful as their observing all the *dharmas* and *karmas* properly.

1164. Know that the bodiless and indivisible great *Mukta's* walking as if [he were] having a body, is as if the supreme space [of consciousness] were walking [on earth], just like Lord Vishnu, who paced [all] the worlds as His domain.

Michael James: Since the *Jivan-mukta* has realized that He is not the limited body, He shines devoid of the body as the indivisible and unlimited Self. However, in the outlook of *ajnanis* He seems to have a body and to be walking on earth. Since it is truly nothing but a formless space of Self which seems to be walking in the form of that body, it is as wonderful as Lord Vishnu, who assumed a vast form and covered all the worlds in three paces, thereby claiming them as His domain.

1165. Though the *Jnani* – who, having discarded the collection of implements [*karuvi*] and instruments [*karana*] as the doers which perform the actions, has no contact with them, which are the doers – [seemingly] does [actions], He is a non-doer.

Sadhu Om: The word 'implements' [*karuvi*] means the five sense-organs [*jnanendriyas*], namely the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and skin, and the five organs of action [*karmendriyas*], namely the mouth, legs, hands, anus and genitals, while the word 'instruments'

[*karana*] means the four inner organs [*antahkaranas*], namely the mind, intellect, *chittam* and ego. Knowing that it is only these implements and instruments which are performing all actions and knowing that they are none of them 'I', the *Jnani* has discarded them and remains without having even the least contact with them, and hence He ever remains without any sense of doership, even though in the outlook of others He may seem to be performing actions. Refer here to verses 1105, B21, 1133, B22 and 1140.

1166. Those [the *Jnanis*] who are joyfully content at heart with whatever comes [of its own accord due to *prarabdha*], who have transcended all the dyads [*dvandvas*], who are devoid of jealousy and who have attained the state of peace in the midst of success and failure, will not be bound by the actions [*karmas*] which they [seem to] do.

Michael James: The above four-line verse by Sri Muruganar is a paraphrase of verse 22 of chapter 4 of the *Bhagavad Gita*. The same idea is expressed by Sri Bhagavan in verse 40 of *Bhagavad Gita Saram* and also in the following two-line verse.

B26. Know that He [the *Jnani*] who is balanced [both in success and failure], being happy with whatever is obtained [according to *prarabdha*], having jealousy and having discarded the dyads [or pairs of opposites such as pain and pleasure, likes and dislikes, and so on], is not bound even though He [seemingly] does actions.

51 The Nature of Those who Abide as Self

(Tanmayar Salbu Tiran)

1167. Those who scrutinize [and judge] the *Jnani* by outward signs, will come back having seen [Him] as emptiness, [because] they do not see the inner light [of the *Jnani*], which cannot be known by the empty [fleshy] eye in the face.

Sadhu Om: Some people go to see a *Jnani* in order to earn merit [*punya*]. However, due to their immaturity of mind they see only the outward appearance of the *Jnani*, and since that appearance is not

in accordance with their wonderful preconceived notions of how a *Jnani* should be, they return disappointed. Moreover, just like a person who wants to take a bath who returns covered with mud, such immature people sometimes even ridicule the *Jnani* and thereby come back with bundles of sins [*papas*] accumulated by their vilifying Him instead of praising Him [see verse 1138].

Even in the life of Sri Bhagavan there were some people who used to ridicule and find fault with Him. For example, not knowing how Sri Bhagavan had lived in the early days, completely oblivious to His body and lying or sitting on the bare mud ground, some people who saw Him in later days living a seemingly normal life of activity and sitting on a comfortable sofa, used to remark, "What is this! He is sitting on a sofa supported by soft cushions. He is eating and behaving like us. Is He a *Rishi*? Is this *Jnana*?" Therefore, the present verse is given as a warning to such ignorant people who try to judge a *Jnani* by His outward appearance.

1168. When measured only by *siddhis*, the greatness of a *Jivan-mukta* will be known wrongly. *Muktas* will shine whether with *siddhis* or without them. [Therefore] those who admire *siddhis* cannot know [the real greatness of a *Jivan-mukta*]. Know thus.

Sadhu Om: A certain mathematician who had won a Nobel Prize, had a six-year-old son who had difficulty in memorizing the nine-times table. One day the small boy asked his father whether he could repeat the nine-times table. When his father repeated it correctly, the boy was wonder-struck and exclaimed with pride, "Ah, how wise is my father! That is why the world honoured him with a Nobel Prize! Really he deserves that prize!" Worldly people who will approve someone to be a *Jnani* only if he is seen to perform *siddhis*, are not better than this boy, who approved his father's award only because he was able to repeat the nine-times table.

1169. The world is full of fools who belittle the greatness of a *Jnani*, which exists and shines far away [beyond human comprehension], by imagining [that they see in Him] many *siddhis*, which are seen only by their completely unfit and petty deluded mind.

Michael James: Fools think that they are glorifying a *Jnani* when

they imagine that they see so many *siddhis* in Him. In fact, however, they are only belittling Him, because the *siddhis* which they see are a mere mental imagination, while His true greatness lies beyond the mind.

1170. Know that attributing greatness to the perfect one who abides as Self because of the *siddhis* [which He may seem to perform], is [like] praising the greatness of the fully shining sun by merely glorifying the wondrous beauty of an atom of a bright ray which enters a house [through a hole in the roof].

1171. He who, while continuing to live a life in the body and world, has known the body and the world to be [nothing but] consciousness [or Self], will delude others as if He were bound by the body and world. [Therefore] who can know [the real nature of] a *Mukta* from His face [that is, by seeing His mere outward appearance]?

Sadhu Om: "... He [who abides as Self] does not know anything other than Self; [therefore] who can and how to conceive what His state is?" says Sri Bhagavan in verse 31 of *Ulladu Narpadu*.

52 The Greatness of Silence

(Mauna Matchi Tiran)

1172. The one letter – which is pure, which bestows the glory of true knowledge [*mey-jnana*] and which is the source of all letters which have a rising [in the form of sound or light] – is that which always shines of its own accord [or as Self] in the heart! Who is able to write it?

Sadhu Om: On 30th September 1937 a devotee named Somasundara Swami requested Sri Bhagavan to write "one letter" [or *ezhuttu*] in his notebook. Sri Bhagavan graciously replied by writing a two-line verse [*kural venba*], in which He said, "The one letter [or *ezhuttu*] is that which always shines of its own accord [or as Self] in the heart! Who is able to write it?" Subsequently when Sri Bhagavan explained the nature of that one letter, Sri Muruganar recorded His explanation in the above verse, in which he incorpo-

rated Sir Bhagavan's *kural venba* as the last two lines. Later still, Sri Bhagavan translated His *kural venba* into Sanskrit and Telugu. In the Sanskrit version He said, "The one letter [*ekam aksharam*] uninterruptedly shines of its own accord in the heart! How can it be written?". Finally, on 21-9-1940, Sri Bhagavan converted His *kural venba* into a *venba* [a four-line verse] by adding two more lines at the beginning, in which He gave the reason why the verse was composed:

> **That [which is worthy to be called a] letter [*aksharam*] is the one letter [or *ezhuttu*]. You have requested [me] to write that one letter [*aksharam*] in this book. The one letter, which is imperishable [*aksharam*], is that which always shines of its own accord [or as Self] in the heart! Who is able to write it?"**

The word *'aksharam'*, which is used three times by Sri Bhagavan in this verse, means both 'letter' and 'that which is imperishable', and hence the first sentence may alternatively means, "That which is imperishable [*aksharam*] is the one letter".

The one letter mentioned in this verse is Self itself. Its real form is only Silence [*mauna*], which is the correct definition of *Jnana*. The Self-consciousness 'I-I' shines transcending light and sound. Since it shines devoid of sound as the mere *sphurana*, <u>it transcends sound,</u> and thus it transcends language. Moreover, since Self is the self-shining pure consciousness [*prajna*] which is beyond all kinds of gross and subtle lights, <u>it transcends light</u>, and thus it cannot have the form of a written letter, since all visible forms come within the range of light.

The first expression of the true consciousness of the supreme reality, Self, is the *sphurana* 'I'. The *Pranava 'Om'* is only the sound-form of that reality, which rises later as a secondary expression of it. But since that which shines as the reality of the sound '*Om*' is only Self or 'I', Sri Bhagavan sang in verse 13 of *Sri Arunachala Akshara Mana Malai*, "O Arunachala, reality of 'Om', unequalled and unsurpassed! Who can understand you?", and He used to say that, even prior to '*Om*', the natural name of the reality is only the consciousness 'I', which transcends both sound and light. Refer here to verses 712 and 713 of this work.

Therefore, since Self, the foremost reality, is one [*ekam*] and since nothing exists other than it, Sri Bhagavan asks who can write

it, and how or where it could be written. Thus, though the devotee who requested Him to write "one letter" in his notebook, Sri Bhagavan taught the whole world that which shines of its own accord in the heart cannot in any way be thought of, spoken or written, and that all one can do is to be it and to know it as it is in the heart.

1173. If it be asked, "[What is] the [true] divine language, which is the source of all languages, which is real and which possesses the greatest clarity?" That language is only Silence [*mauna*], which the Lord [Sri Dakshinamurti] who is the embodiment of knowledge [*jnana-swarupa*] seated at the foot of the banyan tree, taught.

Michael James: Verse 10 of the appendix to *Guru Vachaka Kovai – Urai* should be included here (see note to verse 1027). In this verse Sri Bhagavan says:

> **Silence [*mauna*] is the form [literally, state] of Grace, the one [single, non-dual, unequalled and incomparable] language which is [always] surging within.**

A devotee once wrote an article about Sri Bhagavan entitled 'Where Silence is an Inspired Sermon'. Seeing this, Sri Bhagavan wrote the above one-line verse giving a definition of Silence. "Silence is unceasing eloquence... it is the perennial flow of 'language' [the true language of Grace]", says Sri Bhagavan in *Maharshi's Gospel*, Book One, chapter 2.

1174. Since that great *Brahman*, which cannot be revealed even by countless commentaries, is revealed only by the Silence of the Guru, who is rare to attain, know that the commentary of that Silence alone is the best commentary.

1175. The 'I am the body'-sense [*alaya-vijnana*] is the supporting base for the world, which appears as if very real. The imperishable foundation stone for the *alaya-vijnana* is Silence [*mauna*], the ancient primal reality.

Sadhu Om: Sri Muruganar explained that, since the world appears in a moment [*kshanika*] and disappears in a moment, the word *'kshanika'* is used in this verse to denote the world. He also

explained that *alaya-vijnana* is the body-consciousness which continues in the body until the death of the body, that is, that it is the mind, whose form is the 'I am the body' sense [*dehatma-buddhi*].

The base on which the world and body appear is the mind, the 'I am the body' consciousness, and the base on which the mind appears is Self, the pure consciousness, which is Silence. Therefore the indestructible Silence alone is the base for all kinds of knowledge.

1176. Instead of arguing by the sharpness of the intellect [*mati*], which [rises and] subsides, "It [the reality] exists", "It does not exist", "It has form", "It is formless", "It is one [non-dual]", "It is two [dual]", the Silence of existence-consciousness-bliss [*sat-chit-ananda*], which is the ever-unfailing experience, alone is the real religion [*mata*].

Sadhu Om: Using the sharpness of the petty and transitory intellect, whose nature is to rise and subside, to argue about the existence or the nature of the eternal supreme reality, is not true religion. The ever-existing experience of Silence, in which all such arguments have been given up, alone is the true religion. Refer here to verse 34 of *Ulladu Narpadu*, and to verses 989 to 993 and 1235 of this work.

1177. When *Jnana* has not risen by the divine life of Silence, the glorified and transcendent primal religion [*adi-mata*], taking possession of the heart, will the sense of difference [*bheda-mati*] be removed in the least even by thoughts of delusive caste and religions practices?

Sadhu Om: The state of inequality caused by differences such as high and low can be removed permanently and completely only in Silence, the state of Self-abidance, and it can never be removed even in the least by any number of reformations made in religious and caste practices.

1178. Just as the many rivers which run and merge into the [one] great ocean [are all of the nature of water], so all religions – which flow only towards the ocean of Siva, the abundant consciousness-bliss [*chit-ananda*],

as their target – are Siva-*mayam* [of the nature of Siva]. Therefore, there is no place for differences [in the ultimate goal of all religions].

1179. Since, when one dives within having as [one's sole] aim the liking [to know] thus, 'Who am I who notices the differences in the tenets [of the various religions]?', the 'I' [the individuality or *jiva*] dies and becomes non-existent leaving only the ever-existing Self [which always shines devoid of differences], in that Silence can the sense of difference remain?

1180. "If the sense of difference will not remain in that Silence, can the opposite sense [the sense of non-difference] alone remain?" – if it be asked thus, [the answer is that] the sense of non-difference [*abheda-buddhi*] glorified by the knowers of reality is only the loss of the sense of difference [*bheda-buddhi*].

Michael James: When *Jnanis* speak of the experience of non-difference, what they mean is only the non-experience of difference, because in the state of Silence no differences exist to be experienced. However, having read the term *abheda-buddhi* [sense of non-difference] in the scriptures, many people wrongly imagine that the *Jnani* knows all the differences but experiences non-differences in those differences. Refer to verse 931 and 932, where this wrong idea is refuted.

1181. The gross [or defective] questions and answers are [seemingly] real in the language of duality [*dvaita*], but when known [correctly], those questions and answers to do not exist even in the least in the perfect language of non-duality [*advaita*], which is Silence.

Michael James: The above four-line verse is an adaptation of a verse in *Panchadasi (2-39)*. The same idea is also expressed by Sri Bhagavan in the following two-line verse.

B27. Questions and answers exist only in the language of this duality [*dvaita*]; in non-duality they do not exist.

1182. When scrutinized, the true conversation going on without interruption between them [the Guru and the

disciple], who are having the joy of shrewd questions [and answers] which reach perfection, is only reaching and abiding there [in the mind-free state of Silence] where, if they reach and abide, both their minds will unite.

Sadhu Om: The aim of a conversation in the form of questions and answers between a Guru and a disciple is to enable the disciple to reach the perfect state of reality. But since questions and answers can exist only in the realm of duality, they can never take one to the non-dual state of perfection. Therefore, the true and perfect 'conversation' between a Guru and a disciple [*guru-sishya samvada*] is only their reaching and abiding in the state of Silence, in which both their minds have united and become one.

The perfect way in which a disciple can 'question' and learn from the Guru is to abide in Silence, for the real *Sadguru* is always 'answering' and teaching through the non-dual language of Silence. If the disciple does not abide in the thought-free state of Silence, he cannot correctly understand the *Jnana-upadesa* taught by the Guru through the language of Silence. Only in that state of Silence will *Brahman* be truly revealed. "Silence is ever-unceasing eloquence; it is the most perfect language. It is a perennial flow of the language of Grace. Words obstruct the language of Silence [*mauna-bhasha*]. Oral lectures can never be so eloquent as Silence", says Sri Bhagavan. [Refer to *Maharshi's Gospel*, Book One, ch.2, from which this quotation is paraphrased].

53 The Pure Silence

(Suddha Mauna Tiran)

1183. Know that Self, which is to be enquired into and attained in the heart as the state of happiness through the requisite *tapas* [or Self-attention], is only the state of Silence [*mauna*], which is experienced by removing the delusive and worthless knowledge of differences [along with its root, the ignorance or wrong knowledge 'I am this body'].

Sadhu Om: Self, which is the fruit to be attained through enquiry or *vichara*, is only the Silence devoid of the wrong knowledge 'I am the body'.

1184. The state of the experience of the one non-dual Silence [*eka advaita mouna anubhuti*], which is attained as the experience of the unlimited true knowledge [*mey-jnana*], is only the shining [of oneself] as the empty space devoid of the false imagination which is the rising of the wicked ego-mind.

Sadhu Om: Silence is only the state in which the ego or mind, which is merely a false imagination, has been destroyed.

1185. Since the Silence of Self, which shines through the pure mind [the pure existence-consciousness which is devoid of all thoughts], alone turns out to be the gateway to Liberation, even though they proceed along any path which is agreeable [to them], that gate alone is the final refuge.

Sadhu Om: Through whatever path one may proceed towards the state of Liberation, one can finally enter that state only through the gateway of Silence – the gateway of egolessness or mindlessness. Sri Bhagavan used to say, "Through whatever road one may approach the town of liberation, in order to enter that town one must pay the toll-gate fee. That toll-gate fee is the destruction of one's ego or mind."

1186. Attending unceasingly and with a fully [concentrated] mind to Self, which is the non-dual perfect reality, alone is the pure supreme Silence; on the other hand, the mere [unthinking] laziness of the dull mind is nothing but a defective [and *tamasic*] delusion. Know thus.

Sadhu Om: Laziness or sluggishness of the mind is not true Silence. Self-attention alone is true and pure Silence.

1187. Know that the inner Silence – the undecreasing strength of unceasingly praising and worshipping, without worshipping, the Feet of Lord Siva by the beautiful Supreme Word [*para-vak*], which is the pure unrising speech [that is, worshipping by Self-attention, the non-rising of the ego] – alone is the true and natural worship [of the reality].

1188. Only those who have known their reality to be Siva [the Self], are those who are soaked in the perfect and natural state of Silence. [Therefore] having removed the 'I'-sense in anything other than Siva [that is, having given up one's identification with all adjuncts such as the body], abide without action in Siva.

1189. The glory of the state of Silence – in which one has merged and died in the real principle [*mey-tattva*], God, who is the egoless Self, by enquiring 'Who am I, the false first person?' – alone is the nature of the observance of self-surrender [*sarangati-dharma*].

Michael James: The true practice of self-surrender is for one to subside through the enquiry 'Who am I?' and thereby to merge and abide in Self, the state of Silence which is devoid of even the least rising of the ego, the first thought 'I am this'. Refer also to verse 482.

Sri Muruganar: Note that the idea of this verse, namely that Silence, which is the goal of Self-enquiry, alone is the truth of perfect self-surrender, is also expressed by the great Vaishnavite Saint Nammazhwar in the following verse of his: "Not knowing myself, I lived as 'I' and 'mine' [as if 'I' were this body and these possessions were 'mine']; O Lord of heavenly beings who is worshipped by gods, I am You and my possessions are Yours."

1190. According to the *prarabdha* [of the *jiva*], the Supreme makes the *jiva* act until it [the *prarabdha*] comes to an end. Efforts made will be a failure due to *prarabdha*; even [in spite of] obstructions, it [the *prarabdha*] will bear fruit. [Therefore] to remain silent [without trying to oppose one's *prarabdha*] is best.

Sadhu Om: This verse expresses the same *upadesa* which Sri Bhagavan gave to His mother in 1898, when she was pleading with Him to return to Madurai, namely "According to the destiny [*prarabdha*] of each person, the Ordainer, being in each place, makes them act. That which is never to happen will not happen, however much effort is made; that which is to happen will not stop, however much obstruction is made. This is certain. Hence, to

remain silent is best.” This and the next verse may be read along with verses 150 and 151.

1191. It is not possible for anyone to do anything opposed to the ordinance [*niyati*] of God, who has the ability to do [anything and] everything. [Therefore] to remain silent at the Feet [of God], having given up [all] the anxieties of the wicked, defective and delusive mind, is best.

1192. If we scrutinize [what] the method [is] to end [for ever] the movements of the wavering mind or ego, which is [like] a reflection in [wavy] water, [we will discover that] the method is for one to remain silently attending to oneself alone, and not for one to attend to that [the wavering mind], which will make one slip down from the state [of Self].

Sadhu Om: The only method to still the wandering mind permanently is for one to attend silently to oneself [the first person, ‘I’], and not for one to attend to the wandering mind, which is nothing but a bundle of ever-changing thoughts pertaining to second and third persons. However, do we not nowadays hear that many would-be gurus are advising aspirants, “Go on watching the thoughts of the mind,” as if this were a true method of spiritual practice [*jnana-abhyasa*]? Since all the thoughts of the mind are nothing but worthless second and third persons, to attend to those thoughts is a useless method which is recommended only by Vedantins who lack true experience. To reveal that this method is of no use for permanently stilling [i.e. destroying] the mind, Sri Bhagavan says in this verse, “The [correct] method is for one to remain silently attending to oneself [the first person] alone, and not for one to attend to the wavering mind [which is a bundle of second and third person objects]”. Refer to pp. 101 to 102 of T*he Path of Sri Ramana* – Part One for a fuller explanation.

In verse 17 of *Upadesa Undiyar* Sri Bhagavan says that if one vigilantly scrutinizes the form of the mind, it will be found that there is no such thing as mind at all. This teaching is misinterpreted by some people to mean that one should attend to or watch the mind, that is, the thoughts pertaining to second and third person objects. However, it should be understood that whenever Sri

Bhagavan recommends us to scrutinize the mind, He does not mean that we should attend to thoughts pertaining to second or third persons, but only that we should attend to and scrutinize the first person or ego the root-thought 'I'. If we thus attend to the thought 'I', it will automatically subside and disappear, whereas if we attend to other thoughts, they will multiply and wax in strength. Therefore, in the present verse Sri Bhagavan reveals that if we attend to the thoughts of the wavering mind, we will be slipping down from our natural state of Self-abidance, in which no second or third person can be known.

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1193. Those who have perfect knowledge say that the state of true knowledge [*mey-jnana-samadhi*], in which one remains without 'I' [the ego], alone is *mauna-tapas*. In order to experience [that] silence [*mauna*], which is devoid of the body-thought [the feeling 'I am this body'], clinging to the Self in the heart is the *sadhana*.

1194. The pure Silence which shines forth when the 'I'-sense [the ego] is lost by [one's] abiding in the heart, knowing one's own real existing state instead of going outwards cherishing and attending to other things, alone is the limit of *Jnana*.

Michael James: The state of *Jnana* is that which is devoid of any limit and beyond all definitions. If at all a limit or definition is to be given for *Jnana*, it is only the pure Silence which remains shining after the ego is destroyed.

1195. Since, just as the activities seen within [and by] a dream-person become laughable and non-existent in the outlook of the waking person, even the activities of the *jiva* [such as his birth and death], which are an

imagination [seen by him] within himself, become non-existent in [the true awakened outlook of] Self-knowledge, all [of those activities, including his bondage and liberation] are unreal [and are a mere play of *maya*].

1196. When the pure gracious Supreme reveals the nature of Self, he who was in the dark room [of *ajnana*] will merge in the Silence of Self-abidance, drowning in Siva-*bodha* [God-knowledge or existence-consciousness], which is the beauty of the reality.

1197. Know that Silence – which is the perfect knowledge of the form of Self and which shines within when the ego reaches the heart by rejecting all the juggleries of thoughts [*sankalpa-jalas*], which are rarely rejected – alone is the glorious Supreme Word [*para-vak*].

Sadhu Om: This verse reveals the true import of the word *'para-vak'*, which was used by Sri Bhagavan in verses B12, 706 and 715.

1198. Only those who have not keenly listened to the Lord's language of Grace [Silence], which is the Supreme Word [*para-vak*], [which shines forth] when the wandering mind subsides, will say that [the sound of] a flute is sweet, that [the sound of] a *veena* is sweet, or that the prattling speech of their own babbling children is very sweet.

Sadhu Om: Since the *Sadguru's* language of Grace – the *para-vak* or Silence which shines forth in the heart when the wandering mind subsides and is destroyed there – bestows immortal and perfect bliss, it is sweeter than even the sweetest sound in this world.

Because the Sage Tiruvalluvar wrote the *Tirukkural* in order to give advice to all sorts of people according to their own level of maturity, in verse 66 [in the chapter concerning having children, which comes in the section dealing with the life of householders] he said, "Only those who have not heard the prattling speech of their own children, will say that [the sound of] a flute is sweet or that [the sound of] a *veena* is sweet". But merely because Tiruvalluvar said thus, we should not at all come to the conclusion

that hearing the prattling speech of one's own children is the sweetest of all experiences. Since hearing the prattling of children can give one only a transitory pleasure, Sri Bhagavan addresses aspirants who are engaged in the highest spiritual practice and says in this verse that the sweetness of the supreme Silence of the *Sadguru*, which is ever shining within the heart, is greater and more real than the sweetness of the sound of one's prattling children.

However, readers should not conclude from this verse that Tiruvalluvar was one of "those who have not keenly listened to the Lord's language of Grace, which is the Supreme Word, [which shines forth] when the wandering mind subsides", but should understand that, since he himself never had any children, he composed that verse only for the sake of householders who seek worldly pleasures.

1199. If the noise of thoughts [*sankalpas*] rising [incessantly] within does not subside, the ineffable state of Silence will not be revealed. Those whose thoughts [*vrittis*] have subsided within, will not leave the strong and perfect [state of] Silence even in a big battlefield.

Sadhu Om: Just as the sweet sound of soft and melodious music cannot be heard in a place where there is a great noise such as the hubbub of a market or the roaring of the waves of an ocean, so the sweet silent teaching [*mouna-upadesa*] of the *Sadguru*, which is ever going on deep within the heart, cannot be heard by ordinary people because of the noise of the millions of thoughts which are incessantly rising in their minds. On the other hand, because of the strength of His Silence, even the great noise of battlefield will remain unknown to a *Jnani*, who has annihilated the mind by destroying all thoughts or *sankalpas*. Because the *ajnani* attends only to the hubbub of thoughts, he does not notice the ever-shining Silence within, whereas because the *Jnani* attends only the Silence within, He does not know even the greatest noise which may be going on outside.

1200. Tell me, is not the vocal silence observed by those who do not engage in Self-enquiry [*jnana-swa-vichara*] and who do not know the real goal, which is

the Silence [that shines forth] when the ego, 'I am the fleshy and filthy body', subsides and reaches the heart, a [mere] mental endeavour [*chitta-vyapara*]?

Sadhu Om: The effort of those who merely observe vocal silence instead of engaging in Self-enquiry or Self-attention, which is the real state of Silence of mind, is useless.

1201. The life of Self – the true knowledge [*mey-jnana*] which shines forth devoid of the ego-sense due to the drowning [of the ego] in its source when the madness of desire for the petty, illusory and delusive sense-objects has been completely destroyed – alone is that which can [truly] satisfy the mind.

1202. Those whose hearts are surging with joy by experiencing the ever-new ambrosia [*amrita*] of Self, which shines brightly in the pure Silence, will not be spoilt in the world by experiencing the petty sense-objects, which give a little mad pleasure caused by mental delusion.

1203. The reality which is very clearly known by Sages as the goal [*siddhanta*] of all *Vedas* and *Agamas*, and the observance of reality [*sat-achara*] recommended by all *dharma-upadesas*, is [nothing but] Silence, the state of supreme peace.

Sadhu Om: The ultimate goal which is taught in all the *Vedas*, *Agamas*, *dharma-sastras* and other scriptures is only the state of perfect Silence [*pari-purna-mauna*], which is nothing but the destruction of the mind [*mano-nasa*]. Refer to the work *Who am I?* where Sri Bhagavan says that all scriptures finally conclude that in order to attain liberation one must quell the mind.

1204. The complete giving up of all [the other three *purusharthas*] beginning with *dharma*, is the glorious state of peace, which is the nature of liberation [the fourth *purushartha*, the only true *purushartha*]. [Therefore] completely giving up [all] thought of the others [the three false *purusharthas*], cling only to Silence, the knowledge of the supreme Self, which is Siva.

Sadhu Om: The true *purushartha* or goal of human life is the peaceful state of liberation, which can be attained only when one completely gives up the desire for the other three so-called *purusharthas*, namely *dharma*, *artha* and *kama*. Therefore, one should give up even the thought of those other three *purusharthas* and should steadfastly abide in Silence, the supreme state of Self-knowledge, which alone is liberation. Refer here to verse 8 of this work.

54 Supreme Devotion

(Para-Bhakti Tiran)

1205. When one has completely surrendered oneself at the Feet of Siva and has become of the nature of Self, the [resulting] abundant peace, in which there is not even the least room within the heart [for one] to make any complaint about [one's] defects and deficiencies, alone is the nature of supreme devotion.

Sadhu Om: If one has surrendered oneself completely to God, it will be impossible for one to pray even for liberation. Refer here to verse 7 of *Sri Arunachala Navamani-malai.*

1206. In the heart which exists and shines as the true and perfect bliss, having become a target to the Grace of God, can there be the petty deficiencies of mind, which are a sign of the fleshy ego-sense [the feeling 'I am this fleshy body'], which is ignorance?

1207. Only so long as there are other thoughts in the heart, can there be a thought of God conceived by one's mind. The death of even that thought [of God] due to the death of [all] other thoughts [including the root-thought 'I'], alone is the true thought [of God], the unthought thought.

Sadhu Om: Only so long as there are other thoughts in one's mind, can one think of or meditate upon God. But the true thought of or meditation upon God, which is the "unthought thought", is only that state in which all other thoughts, including the first thought 'I am this body', have died through self-surrender.

Only after the rising of the ego or thinker, the first thought 'I

am the body', can other thoughts rise about the world and God. After the rising of these thoughts, since one then feels that God is different from oneself, one can only meditate upon Him as an object of thought. But when the ego, the root-thought 'I', dies through self-surrender, not only will all the thoughts about the world vanish, but even the thought of God, which has the same reality [*sama-satya*] as the other thoughts, will also disappear. This state, which is devoid of all thought of world, soul and God, and in which one shines as the thought-free supreme reality, alone is the true meditation or *Brahma-dhyana*.

1208. If you ask, "Tell me, why is 'being still' [the state of mere being described in the previous verse], which is devoid of even a single rising thought, called a 'thought' [or 'meditation']?", know that it is because of the shining of the ever-unforgettable consciousness of the reality ['I am'].

Sadhu Om: Thinking and forgetting are a dyad [*dvandva*] or pair of opposites. Since the ever-unforgettable consciousness of reality ['I am'] shines perfectly in the state of 'being still' – the state of Self-attention or Self-abidance – that state is sometimes referred to as a state of 'thought' or 'meditation' [*dhyana*]. That is, since the reality is not forgotten in that thought-free state, it is loosely described as a state of 'thinking of' or 'meditating upon' the reality. It is only in this sense that Sri Bhagavan described the state of Self-attention as 'thought of Self' [*atma-chintanai*] in *Who am I*? and in verse 482 of this work.

1209. The love that wells up within, in the place [the heart] where the clear peace is attained due to the light [of *Jnana*], which surges forth when the delusive mind, which is filled with the poisonous darkness [of *ajnana*], is destroyed and when the heart becomes open like the space, alone is the true love [*mey-bhakti*] for Siva.

1210. Only those fortunate ones who live always depending only upon Self [which is the true form of God] as the best refuge, will attain their own reality. For others, liberation, that unending gracious Supreme Abode

[*param-dhama*], is unattainable by any means whatsoever.

1211. The true devotees who in all ways remain subjected [*adhina*] only to Self [God], [alone] are *tadiyars* [those who belong to the Lord]. Know that only for them [those true devotees], in whom there is unceasing love, will the Supreme Abode [*param-dhama*], which triumphs as transcendent, be a complete attainment.

55 The Attainment of *Jnana*

(Jnana-Siddhi Tiran)

1212. Though *siddhis* are said to be many and different, *Jnana* alone is the highest of those many different *siddhis*, [because] those who have attained other *siddhis* will desire *Jnana*, [whereas] those who have attained *Jnana* will not desire other [*siddhis*]. [Therefore] aspire [only for *Jnana*].

1213. One who has attained Self [*atma-swarupa-siddha*] is one who has attained all other [*siddhis*] together, since that one [Self-attainment or *atma-siddhi*] is the highest *siddhi*. Just as [all] the planets are within space, [whether] manifest or unmanifest, all of them [all the *siddhis*] will be in one who has attained Self-knowledge [*atma-jnana-siddha*].

1214. If by diving deep one reaches the bottom of the heart, the sense of baseness [the feeling 'I am a petty *jiva*'] will leave and perish, and the life of being the Lord of *Jnana*, at whose Feet even the king of heaven [Indra] will bow down his head, will come to be lived [by one].

56 *Brahman*

(Brahman Tiran)

1215. The blissful silent real principle [Self or *Brahman*] alone is the stage or base for *Maya* – who is the great power of consciousness [*maha-chit-sakti*], which is not other than the real perfect principle – to play [her] game for ever, having the three principles [the world,

soul and God] as [her] playthings. What a wonder it is!

Sadhu Om: From this verse we should understand that, apart from *Brahman*, *Maya* has no real existence of her own. The three principles, the world, soul and God, are the playthings with which she enacts her illusory game [*maya-lila*] of creation, sustenance and destruction. But the game she plays with these three could not take place if it did not have Self or *Brahman*, the perfect reality, as its base. The truth that Self ever remains as the base on which *Maya* plays, is what is indicated by *Saktas* when they figuratively depict Goddess Kali dancing on the lying body of Lord Siva. What is to be understood here is that the appearance of the world, soul and God, and of their creation, sustenance and destruction, are all an unreal play of *Maya*, who has no reality of her own. It is with the teaching given in this verse that the first chapter of part two of *The Path of Sri Ramana* begins.

1216. If they see the many moving pictures, they do not see the one unmoving screen, the base. Those who see the unmoving screen do not see any of the pictures. This is the nature of a cinema theatre.

Michael James: When pictures are projected on a cinema screen, they in effect hide that screen. Likewise, when the pictures of names and forms – the world, soul and God – are seen, they in effect hide their base, the Self or *Brahman*. Therefore, just as the screen is seen as it is only when the pictures are not seen, so Self is seen as it is only when the world, soul and God are not seen. Hence, if the world, soul and God are seen, Self will not be seen, and if Self is seen, the world, soul and God will not be seen. Refer also to verses 46, 876 and 877, where the same truth is expressed.

1217. In a cinema-theatre, without the unmoving screen there cannot be any moving pictures. When scrutinized, that one unmoving screen is different from the moving pictures on the screen.

1218. The screen, the unmoving base, alone is *Brahman* [or Self]. The soul, God and worlds are only the moving pictures on that unmoving screen. [Therefore] know

that all that is seen [on that screen] is an illusion [*maya*].

Michael James: The above three verses reveal that the world, soul and God can be seen only when *Brahman* is not seen, but that without *Brahman* there cannot be any world, soul or God, and that, though *Brahman* is thus the reality or base on which they appear, it is different from them. Hence this verse concludes by drawing the inference, "All that is seen (i.e. the world, soul and God) is an illusion". Compare here verse 160 and 1047 and 1049.

1219. He who, in the picture world, thinks about and longs not only for the picture world – which moves with picture souls, which move like himself – but also for the picture God [who creates, sustains and destroys the picture world and picture souls], is only the soul [*jiva*], who is a moving picture.

Sadhu Om: The world, soul and God are mere moving pictures; they cannot be the screen, the base. The soul or man, who is one among the moving pictures, sees the world and God, the other two among the moving pictures, and suffers by having either likes or dislikes towards them. That is, many people see and desire the objects of the world and suffer with the longing to obtain them, while others suffer with the longing to see and attain God. The first kind of people are called worldly people, while the second kind are called devotees of God. However, this verse teaches that, since both these kinds of longing and suffering which people undergo are part of the play of *maya*, they have no meaning whatsoever and are both merely unreal occurrences resulting from the ignorance of not knowing Self or *Brahman*, the supreme reality which is the base on which *maya* thus plays.

1220. For the thought [*chitta-vritti*] which undergoes suffering by thinking itself – who is [in its real nature nothing but] the screen, the unmoving base – to be a moving picture [the soul or *jiva*], the proper thing to do is to abide firmly in the state of Silence, having completely subsided [through Self-attention].

Sadhu Om: The *chitta-vritti* mentioned in this verse is the soul, the ego or 'I'-thought [*aham-vritti*], whose real nature is only Self, the

unmoving base, but who wrongly identifies himself to be a body, one of the moving pictures on the screen, and who thereby sees and desires the other pictures, the world and God.

In the previous verse, even the noble effort of a devotee who longs to see and attain God, was found to be at fault, was it not? When it is so, is it not necessary to teach that noble soul what the proper thing is for him to do? Therefore, in this verse Sri Bhagavan teaches that the best and most noble thing for the soul to do is to subside and abide firmly in the state of Silence by knowing and remaining as Self, the unmoving base on which the moving pictures of the world soul and God appear. Since [as stated in verse 1216] one who sees the screen cannot see the pictures, when one thus knows one's real nature one will not see the pictures of the world, soul and God, and hence one will attain the supreme peace which is devoid of the delusion of being mad after those pictures.

55 The Nature of Liberation

(Mukti Uru Tiran)

1221. The knowledge of one's own true nature – which remains in the heart when even the thought of being saved from bondage is destroyed due to the complete removal of the thought of that bondage in the mind which sees itself [by scrutinizing] thus 'Who am I that am bound?' – alone is the nature of liberation.

Michael James: When the mind sees its own true nature by enquiring 'Who am I that am bound?', it will realize that it was in truth never bound. Therefore, since the thought of bondage is thus completely destroyed, the contrary thought of liberation will also vanish, because bondage and liberation are a dyad [*dvandva*] or pair of opposites, each of which has a meaning because of the other. This verse paraphrases and explains the idea expressed by Sri Bhagavan in *Who am I?* when He said, "Enquiring 'Who am I that am in bondage?', and [thereby] knowing one's own real nature, alone is liberation".

1222. That which is the consciousness-filled peace [*bodha-maya-santa*] which shines as that which remains [when the thoughts of bondage and liberation are thus removed by Self-enquiry], alone is *Sada-sivam* [the eternal reality]. The egoless Silence [which

shines] as [the true knowledge] 'That [*Sada-sivam*], which is the ever-existing Supreme, alone is "I",' alone is the finality of liberation.

Sadhu Om: Verse 40 of *Ulladu Narpadu Anubandham* should be read and understood here.

1223. One's giving up of everything [by one's remaining firmly] without being shaken from the state [of peaceful Self-abidance] on account of slackness [or *pramada*] in [that state of] peace, which surges because of one's enquiry into Self, which is the basic consciousness on which everything [the world, soul and God] appears – alone is liberation.

1224. Unless the objective knowledge [the mind which knows second and third person objects] is completely destroyed, the attachment to the world, which is formed by the senses, which bind the soul, cannot be severed. The destruction of that [objective] knowledge by [one's] remaining in the state of Self, which is *nishtha*, alone is the nature of liberation which one enjoys.

1225. Merely being [as 'I am'] – having known the path which destroys attachment, the enemy which is the mother of the bondage of birth [and death], which gives room for laughter [i.e. which is laughed at by Sages], and having attained that non-attachment – alone is liberation.

Sadhu Om: "The path which destroys attachment, the enemy" is [as shown in the previous verse] to remain in Self, having given up objective knowledge, in other words, to attend only to Self and not to any second or third person objects. "Merely being" means remaining still with the mere consciousness 'I am' and without knowing any other thing.

1226. The saying, "The attainment of a life of pure Self-consciousness, which shines merely as existence ['I am'], alone is the state of liberation, which is the light of supreme knowledge [*para-jnana*]", is the firm ver-

dict of the Seers of reality, which is the crown of the *Vedas*.

58 The Supreme Truth

(Paramartha Tiran)

1227. There is no becoming [creation], and there is also no destruction, the opposite [of creation]; there are no people in bondage, and there are also no people at all doing *sadhana*; there are no people who seek the highest [i.e. liberation], and there are also no people who have attained liberation. Know that this alone is the supreme truth [*paramartha*]!

Sadhu Om: This verse is adapted from the Sanksrit *sloka*, "*Na nirodha na cha utpattih na baddhah na cha sadhakah, Na mumukshuh na vai muktah iti esha paramarthata*," which Sri Bhagavan often used to cite, and which is included in the *Amritabindu Upanishad [Verse 10]*, in the *Atma Upanishad [verse 30]*, in the *Mandukya Karikas [2.32]* and in the *Vivekachudamani [verse 574]*. After seeing this four-line verse composed by Sri Muruganar, Sri Bhagavan expressed the same idea in the following two-line verse.

B28. There is no becoming [creation], destruction, bondage, desire to sever [bondage], effort [made for liberation] for those who have attained [liberation]. Know that this is the supreme truth [*paramartha*]!

Sadhu Om: Creation, destruction, bondage, the desire to sever bondage, the one who seeks liberation and the one who has attained liberation, all exist only in the outlook of the mind. Hence they all have the same degree of reality [*sama-satya*] as the mind which knows them. But as Sri Bhagavan reveals in verse 17 of *Upadesa Undiyar*, when the form of the mind is vigilantly scrutinized it will be found that there is no such thing as mind at all. Therefore, when the mind is thus found to be non-existent, the whole false appearance of creation, destruction, bondage, liberation and so on, will also be found to be completely non-existent. Hence, the absolute truth experienced by a *Jnani*, who has known Self and who has thereby realized the non-existence of the mind, is

only *ajata* – the truth that there was never was, is or will be any creation, birth or becoming at all.

The five divine functions [*panchakrityas*], namely creation, sustenance, destruction, veiling and Grace, are all things which are concerned only with the world, soul and God, which [as revealed in verse 1215] are mere playthings of *maya*. Therefore, whatever appears as real within the range of these five functions, cannot be the absolute truth. Since bondage, liberation, *sadhaka*, *sadhana*, attainment and so on, pertain only to the world, soul and God, they are all unreal. That is to say, since the world, soul and God are the playthings of *maya*, all knowledges pertaining to them are unreal. [See *Ulladu Narpadu* verse 13, "Knowledge of multiplicity is ignorance, which is unreal".] When it is so, only that knowledge which shines transcending *maya*, and which is a knowledge not of manyness but only of oneness, can be the supreme and absolute truth [*paramartha*]. The exact nature of that supreme truth can be known only by *Jnanis*, who firmly abide as that single, all-transcending reality. Their experience alone can be taken to be the absolute truth.

We should here recall that in verse 100 of this work it is stated that though Sri Bhagavan taught various different doctrines to suit the maturity of each one who came to Him, He revealed that His own experience was only *ajata*. In order to show that His own experience was also the experience of the ancient *Rishis* who gave the *Upanishads*, Sri Bhagavan often used to cite the *sloka* of which the present verse is a translation.

The literal meaning of the word *'maya'* is *'ma-ya'* [that which is not], because when Self-knowledge dawns the activity [*vritti*] of *maya*, namely its aforesaid play, will be found to be completely non-existent. Just as the non-existent snake merges into and becomes one with the ever-existing rope as soon as that rope is seen as it is, so the non-existent *maya* will merge into and become one with the ever-existing and Self-shining Self as soon as that Self is known as it is. Therefore, though *maya* is not other than *Brahman* or Self, and though it is said to be beginningless like *Brahman*, it does have an end, since it is found to be non-existent in the clear light of Self-knowledge. Hence, we [Self], who remain shining even in the state in which *maya* is thus found to be

non-existent, alone are the supreme and absolute truth [*param-artha*].

Thus, as the final conclusion of this work, *Guru Vachaka Kovai,* which is also known as '*The Light of Supreme Truth'* [*paramartha dipam*], Sri Bhagavan reveals that Self – which always shines without beginning or end and without any change as the single, non-dual existence-consciousness-bliss [*sat-chit-ananda*] in the form 'I am' – alone is the supreme truth [*paramartha*], and that everything else is a mere play of *maya* and is therefore completely unreal and non-existent.

However, this absolute truth cannot be understood by people who are under the sway of *maya* and are therefore deluded by the defect of ego. Hence, disregarding this supreme truth, they imagine many different goals such as immortalizing the body, heavenizing the earth, going to celestial worlds, attaining powers [*siddhis*] and so on, and believing such goals to be the supreme truth [*paramartha*], in the name of *yoga* or religion they chart out different paths to attain those different goals, they write voluminous books about their own goals and methods, and they become entangled in elaborate arguments about them. However, all such efforts are futile, since they are possible only within the range of the unreal play of *maya*. Refer here to verse 34 of *Ulladu Narpadu*, where Sri Bhagavan says that to argue about the nature of the reality, instead of merging within and knowing it as it is, is only ignorance born of *maya*.

1228. Since it is possible only in [the dim light of] unreality [or ignorance] to make that which exists [appear to be] non-existent and to make that which does not exist [appear to be] that which exists, but impossible [to do so] in the clear [light of] truth, in the certainty which is the truth everything is consciousness [*chit*].

Michael James: A rope can appear to be a snake only in a dim light, and not in complete darkness or in clear light. Likewise, the ever-existing Self or *Brahman* can appear to be the non-existent names and forms [the world, soul and God] only in the dim light of ignorance [the mind-light], and not in the complete darkness of sleep or in the clear light of Self-knowledge. Therefore, since that which exists [Self or *Brahman*] cannot appear to be that which does not exist [the many names and forms] in the clear light of

truth, in that clear light it will be realized that whatever appeared to be existent in the state of ignorance is truly nothing but consciousness, which alone is that which truly exists. That is, just as the rope alone ever exists both when it appears to be the non-existent snake and when it is seen as it is, so consciousness alone ever exists both when it appears to be the non-existent names and forms and when it shines as it is.

1229. Know that all that is told about the soul and God – [such as] that which is the soul that has the bondage of attachment will become God when bondage is removed, just as paddy becomes rice when the husk is removed – is [merely] an imagination of the defective mind [superimposed] on Self, the form of that consciousness.

Michael James: Though scriptures at first say, "Just as paddy becomes rice when its husk is removed, so the soul [or *jivatma*] will become God [*paramatma*] when its bondage of attachment is removed," the supreme truth [*paramartha*] is that there is no soul, God, bondage or liberation at all, and that these are all mere mental imaginations superimposed on Self, which is the sole ever-existing reality.

59 The Perfect Reality

(Semporul Tiran)

1230. Whatever by the mind you think [or know] to be that which exists is in truth that which does not exist. That one [Self] which you cannot have in your mind [i.e. which you cannot think] either to be that which exists or to be that which does not exist, alone is that which exists [*ulladu*].

Sadhu Om: Since the mind is itself an unreal and non-existent entity, everything which is known by the mind as real or existent, is in fact unreal and non-existent. Hence, if Self were something which could be known by the mind, it would also be unreal, would it not? But since Self is declared by Sages to be that which cannot be known by the mind, it alone is that which truly exists and is real.

1231. Say, is it possible by the imagination [the mind] to

deny the greatness [and reality] of the widely pervading and transcendent Supreme, which completely swallows within itself the defects and differences caused by the crowd of all kinds of knowledge?

1232. Know that the consciousness which always shines in the heart as the formless and nameless Self, 'I', [and which is known] by [one's] being still without thinking [about anything] as existent or non-existent, alone is the perfect reality.

1233. Among the six doctrines declared to be without beginning, that non-duality [*advaita*] alone is without end, whereas the other five doctrines have an end. Bearing this in mind, know it clearly.

Sadhu Om: The six doctrines mentioned in this verse are the *shad-darsanas*, the six orthodox schools of Indian philosophy, namely the *Nyaya* school of Gautama, the *Vaiseshika* school of Kanada, the *Sankhya* school of Kapila, the *Yoga* school of Patanjali, the *Purva Mimamsa* school of Jaimini, and the *Vedanta* school of Vyasa. The doctrine referred to in this verse as *Advaita* is the doctrine of *Vedanta*, whose final conclusion is that the non-dual Self or *Brahman*, which transcends *maya*, alone is the ever-existing reality, which has neither beginning or end. On the other hand, the conclusions of the other five schools are all concerned with what is within the range of *maya's* play. Therefore, just as *maya* is said to have no beginning but have an end, these five schools of philosophy are also said to have no beginning but to have an end, since they cannot remain when the truth [Self] is realized and when *maya* thereby comes to an end. Since all doctrines other than *Advaita* are thus invalidated when Self-knowledge dawns, *Advaita* alone is the truth which exists and shines for ever without either beginning or end.

1234. When known [correctly], that which is said to be real is only one. Know that that firm, whole perfect reality alone is that which is described in many ways by *Brahma-jnanis*, who have known [it] by quietly entering the heart with a very subtle intellect.

Michael James: Though the Sages who revealed the six doctrines

(*shad-darsanas*) of Hinduism and who paved the various different religions in the world, had all realized the non-dual perfect reality, they described it in various ways according to the maturity of the minds of those who came to them. However, mature aspirants should understand that, though the reality is thus described by Sages in many different ways, it is in truth one and non-dual.

1235. The truth of non-duality [*advaita-tattva*], which is the highest of all religions, which are so very many, alone is the silent reality, whose nature is the consciousness devoid of the insubstantial and ghostly ego, the seed of the different religions.

Michael James: Refer to verses 989 to 993, 1176 to 1179, and 1242.

1236. Those who know the perfect reality – which does not have beginning or end, which is devoid of change, cause or even object of comparison, and which is that which cannot be known by the deceptive sense of individuality [the ego] – [alone] will attain glory.

60 Transcendence of Thought

(Bhavanatita Tiran)

1237. The glory of *Advaita* will shine in the hearts of *Jnanis* as the unaffected Self after the deceptive triads [*triputis*] have disappeared, but cannot be attained by those who think [of it] by mind like [they think of] the imaginary, unreal, dual and petty sense objects.

1238. The thought-free Siva, who is Self, the real consciousness, cannot be known by those who have a mind which thinks, but only by the thought-free heroes who have a mind which, due to inner consciousness [or Self], has entered and abides in the source of thought, [their thinking] mind having died.

1239. O you [highly mature aspirants] who have intense madness for [the experience of] the greatness of non-duality [*advaita*]! [The experience of] non-duality is only for those who abide in the state of reality, having attained perfect peace of mind [which results

from the complete subsidence of all the thoughts which rise in the mind]. Say, what is the benefit for backward people who do not seek direct abidance in reality.

Michael James: The only true benefit to be attained is the experience of non-duality, which can be attained only by those mature aspirants who through Self-enquiry seek and attain perfect peace of mind, which is the state of abidance in Self, the reality, and not by those immature people who do not even desire to follow the direct path of Self-enquiry and thereby attain the state of Self-abidance.

61 Narration of the Experience

(Anubhavam Uraitta Tiran)

1240. When we recount the experience [attained on account] of the sayings of the Guru [Sri Ramana], [it is the experience that] all that was seen as a forest of attachment [or bondage] is nothing but the ineffable space of the Silence of true Knowledge [*mey-jnana-mauna*] and [that] all inferior knowledge is a dream.

Sadhu Om: In this chapter [verses 1240 to 1248] Sri Muruganar describes the experience of *Jnana* which he attained by the Grace of his *Sadguru*, Sri Ramana.

1241. I have known, I have known the state of supreme truth, which is full of transcendent existence-consciousness [and in which it is known] that in actual truth there is not even the least acquiring of what is called as bondage, liberation and so on, [which all appears only due to one's] having mistaken [oneself] to be other [than Self].

Sadhu Om: When the state of supreme truth [*paramartha sthiti*] is known, one realizes that one had in truth never mistaken oneself to be other than Self, and that consequently one had never been in bondage and had never attained any such thing as liberation.

Sri Muruganar: 'Abiding in this state, having attained the supreme bliss which is devoid of bondage and liberation...' is a saying of Sri

Bhagavan [in verse 29 of *Upadesa Undiyar*]. He has also said [in verse 37 of *Ulladu Narpadu*], "Even the contention held that there is duality during practice and non-duality after attainment, is not true ...". If the state of supreme truth is known as it is, know that even the feeling of liberation will not exist there; since bondage is ever non-existent, the nature of Self is that which is completely devoid of even the knowledge 'I am a *Mukta'*.

1242. Though we look at any religion and though we listen to any doctrine [propounded by those religions], we clearly see that all the doctrines of those religions definitely proclaim only one goal, which shines devoid of differences.

Michael James: In his experience of *Jnana* Sri Muruganar realized that, though different religions seem to proclaim different goals, all those seemingly different goals are in truth only one, namely the state of Self-knowledge, which shines devoid of differences. However, this true harmony and oneness among religions can prevail only in the state of Silence, and cannot prevail merely due to the intellect thinking 'All religions are one', because so long as the intellect exists it cannot but see differences between one religion and another. Refer here to verses 989 to 993, 1176 to 1179, and 1235.

Sri Muruganar: In truth, harmony [among religions] can exist only in Silence [*mauna*], and cannot exist [merely] due to the subtlety of the intellect. After attaining the experience of Silence [*mauna-anubhava*], it will be known as clearly as a fruit in the palm that all religions and doctrines are having the goal of Self-attainment, without any differences among themselves.

1243. When entering and abiding in the Whole [*purna*], which is of the nature of consciousness [*chinmaya*], which shines there in the unerring *Vedas* as the reality, then it is impossible to see the three times [past, present and future], the three places [the first, second and third persons] and the triads [the knower, the act of knowing and the object known].

Michael James: For an explanation about the meaning of 'the three places', refer to the note to verse 447.

1244. When known, the subtle truth revealed [in this work] is [what I learnt through] the silent elucidation [*mauna-vyakhyana*] which was joyfully bestowed [upon me] by *Jnana*-Ramana-Guru-Nathan, who taught [me] having come out in front of me as the foremost true Brahmin.

Sri Muruganar: Since the subtle truth of the above verses [i.e. the whole of this work] can be understood only in the experience of *Jnana*, what the *Jnana-Guru* bestowed upon me was only the essence of the experience of Silence [*mauna-anubhava-sara*]. The words "having come out in front of me" denote that, though the *Jnana-Guru* ever exists within [as Self], He took me as His own by appearing in the play of *maya* with a human physical body like us. Since the clarity [of understanding Sri Bhagavan's teachings] is strengthened only through Silence, it is said "the silent elucidation" [*mauna vyakhyana*].

1245. In my [non-dual] outlook [in which I alone exist as the reality], you do not exist but only I; in your [non-dual] outlook [when you realize that you alone exist as the reality], I do not exist but only you; in one's own [non-dual] outlook [when one has realized the truth], others do not exist but only oneself. When [the truth is thus] known, all of them [I, you, oneself and others] are [nothing but] 'I' [the Self].

1246. Know that I am neither a possession nor am I a possessor; I am neither a slave [a devotee] nor a master [the Lord]; I do not have the dutiful sense of doership [the sense of doership that makes one feel 'I have a duty to do such-and-such things'] and I do not have the sense of experiencership; I am not at all a doer.

1247. Since Self took me as its own, appearing here as the Guru [Sri Ramana] in front of my objective knowledge [my mind], which was lamenting as if it were bound by *maya*, [I pay] most worthy obeisance only to my infinite Self, which blazes like the sun.

1248. Know that, in spite of [any amount of] miserable poverty which may befall [him], [this] Murugan [Sri Muruganar] will never yield to the power of illusion

[*maya-sakti*] of the empty world but only to the power of consciousness [*chit-sakti*] of Supreme Ramana, who is Siva.

Michael James: In the outward life of Sri Muruganar we clearly saw how perfectly he lived up to the truth which he expresses in this verse. In spite of the countless untold miseries and hardships which he had to undergo from the day he came to Sri Bhagavan to the day he left his body, Sri Muruganar was never shaken by and never yielded even in the least to the powerful threats and temptations of the worldly *maya* which surrounded him.

62 The State of Equality

(Sama Nilai Tiran)

1249. For those who remain in Self-abidance [*jnana-atma-nishtha*], which is the foremost *dharma*, there is not even in the least [any differences such as] caste, lineage or religion. There are no differences [such as these] in Self, but only for the worthless, unreal body.

Sadhu Om: The five verses in this concluding chapter all record actual sayings of Sri Bhagavan.

Since Self-abidance is itself the foremost *dharma* and the source of all *dharmas*, and since the various other *dharmas* or duties enjoined according to the different castes, lineages and religions exist only for the body and not for the Self, those who abide as Self need not perform any other *dharma*.

1250. Know that the vision of seeing equality – which is [the experience] that Self alone is the reality in all that is known [through the senses] – alone is the 'equal vision' [*sama-darsana*] which is lucidly proclaimed by Sages, [who have attained] true knowledge [*mey-jnana*] which abounds in equality [*samarasa*].

Michael James: The words '*sama-darsana*' [equal vision] and '*sama-drishiti*' [equal outlook] are generally taken by people to mean seeing all people, all creatures and all things as equal. But in this verse Sri Bhagavan reveals that the true meaning of '*sama-darsana*' or '*sama-drishti*' is only the experience of the *Jnani*, who knows that His own Self is the sole reality behind the

whole world-appearance. So long as manyness and diversity are known, inequality will definitely remain; only in the state of perfect non-dual oneness, in which is known that Self alone exists, can true equality be experienced.

1251. He [the *Jnani*] who is full of perfect peace, which is the experience of the motionless Self, which is devoid of the ego, is one whose mind is not happily pleased by praise and who is never displeased by blame.

Michael James: Refer to verse 38 of *Ulladu Narpadu Anubandham*.

1252. For the knower of reality [*mey-jnani*] – who does not wrongly imagine to be real a life of glory, which is according to *prarabdha*, in the attractive world, which appears only in the unmanifest void like the pleasure of clear water [seen due to a mirage] in the scorching sunshine [of a desert] – even a life of degradation [poverty or misery] will be [experienced as] a great joy.

1253. Know that all the *tapas* which the great divine Sages naturally do without selfish desires, is beneficial to [all] the people of [this] ancient world, providing [them] with beautiful auspiciousness.

Michael James: Since Sri Bhagavan has said in verse 30 of *Upadesa Undiyar*, "Knowing that which survives the destruction of 'I' [the ego]), alone is excellent *tapas*..." we should understand that *Jnanis* are always by their very nature doing the most perfect *tapas*. Refer to verse 303 of this work, where Sri Bhagavan says that the mere existence of a *Jnani* on earth is sufficient to remove all the sins of the world, and to *Day to Day with Bhagavan*, 9-3-1946, where Sri Bhagavan says, "If one *Jnani* exists in the world, his influence will benefit all the people in the world".

Praise

(*Vazhttu*)

1254. Glory to Arunagiri; glory to Ramana Guru; glory to the devotees who live by the one [unequalled] word [Sri Ramana's teachings]; glory to this 'Light of

Supreme Truth' [*paramartha dipam*], which is a fine garland [*Kovai*] of the sayings [*Vachaka*] of the Gurumurti [Sri Ramana], in giving [its] fruit [Self-knowledge]!

Sri Ramanarpanamastu

APPENDIX

Michael James: In the appendix of *Guru Vachaka Kovai – Urai*, Sri Sadhu Om's Tamil prose rendering of *Guru Vachaka Kovai*, the following eleven stray verses of Sri Bhagavan were added, since they are verses containing instructions or *upadesa*. At the end of the note to each verse, it is indicated where in the text of *Guru Vachaka Kovai* it is to be incorporated.

1. Because of the outlook of seeing [this world] as an effect [*karya*] which consists of female, male, neuter and so on, a doer who creates [it] exists as the cause [*karana*] of this world. He destroys and creates this world. Know [that] doer to be Hara [Lord Siva].

Sadhu Om: This verse is an adaptation by Sri Bhagavan of the Sanskrit verse, "*Stri-pum-napumsaka-aditvat jagatah karya-darsanat, Asti karta sah hritva-etat-srijati-asmat-prabhuh-harah*", which is the first verse of *Siva-Jnana-Bodham*.

Cause and effect are a dyad [*dvandva*], since each one has a meaning only because of the other. The purpose of this verse is to teach that, since the world-appearance is seen as an effect, there must exist a God as the cause of it. Refer also to the first verse of *Ulladu Narpadu*.

So long as the world is considered to be an effect, it is necessary to accept that it has a cause. But when Self-knowledge dawns, the world-appearance will be known to be nothing but Self, and the dyad of cause and effect will therefore cease to exist. When the world is thus no longer seen as an effect but only as the uncaused, uncreated and unchanging Self, God will no longer be known as a cause or doer – a separate entity – but will shine as that one undivided Self alone.

This verse is to be incorporated in the text after verse 114.

2. O son, the conjurer [*indrajalikan*] deludes the people of this world without deluding himself, whereas the *siddha* deludes the people of this world and [at the same time] deludes himself. What a great wonder this is!

Sadhu Om: This verse is an adaptation by Sri Bhagavan of a verse

in the *Rama Gita*, "*Aindrajalikakarta-api bhrantan-bhramayati svayam, Abhrantak eva siddhastu svabhratah bhramayatyah*o".

The conjurer who entertains people by performing tricks in the streets knows that his tricks are not real. The *siddha*, on the other hand, believes that the occult powers [*siddhis*] which he displays are real, and hence is deluded into thinking that he has really become great. However, his *siddhis* are in truth no more real than the conjurer's tricks. Therefore, though the *siddha* and the conjurer are equal in their art of deluding others, the *siddha* is inferior to the conjurer because he does not even have the clarity of mind to understand that his powers are unreal.

This verse is to be incorporated in the text after verse 224.

3. O my troublesome soul, you do not give rest to me, the stomach, for [even] one *nazhigai* [twenty-four minutes]; you do not stop eating for one *nazhigai* in a day; you never know my suffering. It is difficult to live with you.

Sadhu Om: On the day of *Chitra-purnima* in the Tamil year *Sukla* [the full-moon day in April-May 1929], a sumptuous feast was served in the Ashram, as a result of which many devotees complained of uneasiness in the stomach. One devotee then quoted a well-known Tamil verse sung by Saint Avaiyar, in which she addresses the stomach and says, "O my troublesome stomach, if you are asked to forgo food for one day, you do not forgo [it]; if you are asked to take [food sufficient] for two days, you do not take [it]; you never know my suffering. It is difficult to live with you."

Hearing this, Sri Bhagavan remarked that under the circumstances it was unfair to blame the stomach by quoting Avaiyar's verse, since it was only the soul or ego which had, for its own satisfaction, stuffed the stomach beyond its capacity. "On the contrary," said Sri Bhagavan, "it would now be fair for the stomach to complain against the soul," and so He composed the above stanza. Because Avaiyar lived on alms and often had to starve for days together, she could justly complain against the troubles which the stomach caused her. But through his verse, Sri Bhagavan humorously instructed His disciples that those people who pamper the sense of taste by overeating have no right to complain against the stomach.

This verse is to be incorporated in the text after verse 492.

4. O you who make a great celebration [about a so-called birthday], [do you know] what is the [real birthday]? The [real] birthday is only that day when, by scrutinizing 'Where were we born?' [that is, "Where or from what did the ego, the false notion "I am this body", rise?], we are born in the reality [Self], which ever shines without birth or death as the one.

Sadhu Om: In 1912, when devotees first began to celebrate His birthday [*Jayanti*], Sri Bhagavan composed this verse and the following one.

In verse 11 of *Ulladu Narpadu Anubandham* Sri Bhagavan has given an answer to the question, "Who is really born?" Likewise, in this verse He has given an answer to the question, "What is the real birthday?" Identifying the body as 'I' due to attachment [*dehabhimana*] is the birth of the *jiva*. But this is in fact a false birth, for identifying the body as 'I' is the death of our true state. On the other hand, since abiding as Self is the only true life, the attainment of Self-knowledge – which is gained by scrutinizing Self, the source of the ego – alone is our real birth.

This verse and the next one are to be included in the text after verse 603.

5. Subsiding [and merging into Self] by knowing oneself – [having discriminated] thus, "Conducting a birthday celebration instead of weeping over [one's] birth [as 'I am this body'] at least on [one's] birthday, is like decorating a corpse" – alone is [true] knowledge [or wisdom].

Sadhu Om: After revealing in the previous verse that Self-realization alone is the real birth, in this verse Sri Bhagavan teaches that it is ignorance to celebrate one's false birthday, the day on which one was born in this world as a body. Even though on other days one forgets to lament, "Alas, I am born in this world by identifying this body as 'I'," at least on one's birthday one should remember to lament thus and to repent for that mistake. If instead one celebrates one's birthday with great pomp, it is like happily decorating a corpse – this body – instead of discarding it with aversion as not 'I'.

This verse and the previous one are to be incorporated in the text after 603.

Editor's note: There are eleven verses in this appendix. In Michael's manuscript verses 6-11 have already been incorporated into the text in the appropriate places. They can be found in the notes to verses 1027, 1127,1141, 1147, 1172, 1173.

Michael James: The following verse was found among the manuscripts of Sri Muruganar with a note "To be added in *Guru Vachaka Kovai*", and was therefore included at the end of the appendix of *Guru Vachaka Kovai – Urai*. This verse is to be incorporated in the text after verse 592.

592a. Since death [*yama-tattva*] comes in the form of forgetfulness [of Self], for the minds of those who [seek to] attain a life of immortality, the five sense objects, whose nature is *tamas* and which function together, it is more dangerous than [any] deadly, cruel poison.

Michael James: Knowing objects through any of the five senses, causes one to lose one's Self-attention, in other words, to forget Self. Such forgetfulness (*pramada*) or loss of Self-attention is declared by Sages to be death (see verse 394 of this work, and verses 321 to 329 of *Vivekachudamani*). Therefore, those who are practising Self-enquiry in order to attain the immortal state of Self, should be careful not to allow even the least room in their heart for desire for sense-objects.